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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for persons, particularly in the helping fields, who wish to develop or improve their understanding of the group process, and their leadership skills. Chapter 1 contains an introduction about group process including information about the book format, strategies for obtaining group experience, and selected references on training group workers. Chapter 2 provides a definition of group counseling. Advantages of group counseling are explained, such as safety factors in groups, social value of group counseling, and feedback for growth. Chapter 3 provides a rationale for group counseling. In this chapter a psychological framework is established and related to the group process. Chapter 4 discusses the process of group counseling, and defines stages within the dynamic of group process. Chapter 5 identifies the developmental tasks contained within the group process. Chapter 6 describes and delineates the qualities, skills, and functions of effective group leaders. Chapter 7 considers the various aspects of group membership of which a group leader needs to be aware. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 focus on the technical dimensions of group work as a means of providing hands-on tools for implementing group programs. Chapter 11 addresses the nature and use of communication activities in groups. Chapter 12 examines family theory as a group resource. Suggested activities are included throughout the book to demonstrate the concepts and provide first-hand involvement with the group counseling process. Chapters provide references. (LLL)

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Integrating Theory, Training and Practice

SECOND EDITION

James P. Trotzer, Ph.D.

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THE COUNSELOR AND THE GROUP

Integrating Theory, Training, and Practice

Second Edition

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ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT INC.
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THE COUNSELOR AND THE GROUP

Integrating Theory, Training and Practice

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PREFACE
(1st Edition)

Group counseling is a helping process that is used increasingly in clinics, schools, and other institutions. As the viability of this way to help people resolve their problems grows, so does the need for trained group leaders. This book provides information about both the skills and the experience knowledgeable leaders require.

There are four prerequisites for an effective group leader: (1) cognitive knowledge about the group process, (2) involvement as a participant in group interaction, (3) skills and techniques for use in a leadership capacity, and (4) supervised experience in the leadership role. Most good group-counseling texts go a long way in providing the first three prerequisites. This book goes a long way in providing all four, because it contains a wealth of information about ***applying*** the knowledge to the process.

This book is for persons (particularly in the helping fields) who wish to develop or improve not only their understanding of the group process but also their leadership skills. The book specifically lends itself to use by counselor educators who teach group-counseling courses, students in training to become counselors, counselors in mental health agencies and schools who want to develop their expertise in group counseling, and a variety of other professional personnel-teachers, psychologists, and social workers-who by the very nature of their professions may wish to increase their group-leadership capacities.

The format of this book is directed toward immediate integration of knowledge and experience. Suggested activities are designed to demonstrate the concepts and provide first-hand involvement with the dynamics of the group-counseling process. In addition, most of the activities serve a dual purpose of demonstrating cognitive components of the group-counseling process and providing prospective leaders with techniques to use in groups of their own.

My hope is that this book will be a functional tool in the training process and that its merit will be based on practicality. Someone once compared teaching with doing and noted that doing is the humbler work. This book is dedicated to the group practitioner in hopes that it will serve as a resource in the often difficult and thankless occupation of helping people.

Expression of appreciation in an effort such as this is difficult because so many individuals have influenced my thinking, feelings, and behavior. However, certain people and experiences do stand out. One such person is Albert Roark of the University of Colorado, who first ignited and nurtured my interest in the group process and who reviewed the first edition of this book. Thanks go, too, to the other helpful reviewers: Gerald Corey of California State University at Fullerton, Thomas Elmore of Wake Forest University, Steven Feit of Idaho State University, and Kenneth Newton of the University of Tennessee. And special thanks must be extended to C. S. Peng of the Taiwan Provincial College of Education in Changhua, who in the course of my tenure there as a visiting professor motivated me and encouraged me to write this book.

Relationships at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls have been invaluable: interaction, discussions, and cooperative group ventures with Wayne Kassera, Dan Ficek, John Hamann, and James Lipsky have stimulated many of the ideas incorporated into this book. I have also been fortunate to have had perceptive and dedicated graduate students who have encouraged and sometimes forced my growth and development. Experiences in workshops with teachers and students and especially therapy group members at the Minnesota State Prison have contributed to my personal and professional development.

But I owe the largest debt of thanks to my wife, daughter, and two sons, who in the course of our continuing relationship have taught me much about the difficulties and joys of intimate group interactions.

James P. Trotzer, Ph.D.

PREFACE

(2nd edition)

In May of 1985 a special issue of *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work* entitled "Critical Issues in Group Work: Now and 2001" addressed the nature and prospects of group work in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. A diverse group of contributors jointly confirmed the presence and essence of group work and pronounced the group modality as a fundamentally sound professional tool in response to the therapeutic needs of our human environment. While endorsing the relevance of group work as a humanizing counter force in a society characterized by the dehumanizing forces of technology with its subsequent information overload and interpersonal isolation, the inherent vulnerabilities of the group approach were also identified. In spite of an evolving history that has substantiated group work as effective across a wide range of helping disciplines, inherent weaknesses persist which if not remedied could jeopardize not only the effectiveness, but the whole future of group work. These weaknesses were encapsulized in three main categories: (1) inconsistent and insufficient training of group leaders; (2) need for a more substantial link between theory, research, and clinical practice; and (3) the necessity of integration in terms of theory, training, and practice across therapeutic modalities (individual, group, and family) and across disciplines. This revision is both a manifestation of and a response to the mandate that these weaknesses be addressed as a means of enhancing group work now and in the future.

I have left the preface to the first edition intact because it represents the seeds and initial growth of my professional development in group counseling and therapy. However, this second edition reflects the influences of my evolutionary professional journey which has led me from individual to group to family counseling and from training as my primary professional thrust to clinical practice as my primary commitment. These shifts have altered and expanded my perspective with respect to group work and consequently this edition reflects those changes. A 3 year stint (1982-85) on the Editorial Board of the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* has also been an influential factor.

When I was teaching I always kept my hand in clinical practice in order to maintain a reality orientation to my training efforts. Now that I am doing primarily clinical work, I find it a necessity to keep myself involved in teaching and training in order not to lose touch with the theoretical basis of effective therapeutic work. Thus, integration has become even more important and relevant.

The integrative aspect of this edition has been enhanced by more than 4000 hours of clinical work with couples and families which constitutes the primary group for all human beings. Conceptual work in adapting the group process to a wide range of populations and settings was made possible by reframing my original group process stages into stage-related developmental tasks—a major addition to the content of this text. Efforts to translate conceptual dynamics into technical tools for both training and application in the leadership role have resulted in expanded activities and techniques added to the end of each chapter. Finally, references and content were expanded and updated to be reflective of the current status of group work. Overall, my purpose has remained integration of theory, training and practice. As such, this book is most appropriate for an initial group course or as a text to accompany a supervised group practicum. It is designed as a handbook for clinicians to use in developing and enhancing their group knowledge and skills and as a resource for understanding group dynamics and implementing group leadership methods and techniques. This revision is my contribution to enhancing the quality of group work as the demand for quality escalates and as the need for skilled group leaders grows.

In some sense I discovered that revision was a more arduous task than the original creation because I was forced to renovate rather than innovate. However, the very process of doing the revision made me realize that group work is dynamic not static, and that just as growth never stops so the process of helping people grow must never stop—otherwise, we become impediments to growth rather than facilitating or enhancing it. Thus, I present this edition to you with the hope that it will spur your professional development in group work in a constructive manner just as preparing it has done for me.

I wish to acknowledge Phillips Exeter Academy for graciously providing me office space in their beautiful library so I could retreat into seclusion to complete this project. Judy Bassett deserves recognition for her efficiency in typing and retyping revisions and additions to the manuscript.

Special thanks are in order to Joe Hollis and his staff at Accelerated Development for their patience, encouragement, and expert assistance in editing and preparing the manuscript for publication. I also wish to acknowledge the staff and Board of Directors at RENEW Counseling Center for enabling me to have the time to work on this revision. Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my family for continuing to teach, encourage, and challenge me to grow as a person and a group member.

James P. Trotzer, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

OUR CHANGING WORLD

The evidence is overwhelming that the world around us is changing at an ever increasing rate and that we as individuals are faced with an ever more complex environment. We are constantly forced to adapt if we want to achieve our potential, individually and collectively. Gazda (1971) pointed out that "the world each of us personally inhabits grows steadily and rapidly larger. No man today has any choice but to be part of a greater and more diverse community" (p.6).

The primary indicator of our expanding world is that we are inundated with the exponential development of new information often referred to as the "knowledge explosion". Waitley (1978) noted that due to the technological marvels of our contemporary society, in one day we are bombarded with eight times the amount of information that our grandparents were exposed to in a lifetime. Futurists drumming the perspective of the computer age estimate that in any one discipline more new knowledge is created in one minute than the mind can absorb in a day. Imagine how far behind we are in a week if these projections are substantiated. No wonder people over thirty feel its too late and people under thirty feel its no use even trying.

Information overload which encourages and demands dependence on technology not only overwhelms individuals but produces a by-product of isolation (Klein, 1985). As individuals our sense of identity is eroded as it becomes modified by and melded with the mechanics of knowledge rather than forged in the cauldron of human interaction. As this experience escalates the seeds of dehumanization are planted and nurtured.

The problems of adjusting to such a world, however, are not the result of the essence or speed of change itself nor the nature or plethora of knowledge, but rather are the result of the conflict that is produced because individual adjustment to change is a slow process. C. Gilbert Wrenn (1971) summarized this basic conflict as one between man's "outer" and "inner" reality. Outer reality-the world outside the boundaries of the individual person-changes very quickly, whereas inner reality-or the individual's values, attitudes, personality, and identity-changes very slowly. The clash of these two realities creates many of the problems confronting us.

Since the pace of scientific and technological change far exceeds that of social change, each of us is confronted with the task of not only "getting ourselves together" but also developing the interpersonal skills necessary to meet our needs in a mobile and changing society. This requires each individual to be strong, flexible, and able to act interdependently. Each of us must increase our "cope-ability," which Toffler (1970) defined as the speed and economy with which we adapt to change.

The personal consequences of change in our environment are readily evident. The individual is bombarded with the inconceivable nature of change, the futility of understanding or impeding it, and the inability to change quickly enough to adapt to it. "We have more knowledge than we know what to do with, more people than we know how to live with, more physical energy than we know how to cope with, and in all things a faster rate of change than we know how to keep up with" (Dyer, 1967, p.4). The impact of these realizations on our existence has effected a massive shift in our patterns of life.

Life-styles have taken on characteristics of a nomadic nature as opposed to a stationary one. "Today, we move more, change jobs and ourselves more and rely on faster and more elaborate technology and communication" (Tiedeman &

Tiedeman, 1973, p. 336). This technology is affecting the very nature of our occupations by causing many jobs to become archaic and creating new jobs requiring different skills and functions. Katz (1973) even projected the possibility that the concept of jobs may be phased out in favor of a view of "occupation" as more of an attitude toward learning. Expanded communication capabilities expose us to problems and social concerns that complicate our lives and demand our attention. Wars, racism, sexism, terrorism, ageism, poverty, inflation, overpopulation, ecology, detente, corruption, and crime all touch our individual lives. As a result we can be assured that we will face the prospect of changing old relationships and beginning new relationships throughout our lives. We must learn to say good-by to the old and hello to the new. But at the same time we must retain the positive aspects of our past experiences to assure our present and future growth.

THE DOMAIN OF CHOICE

What then are the implications for the child, the adolescent, and the adult whose personality and identity are constantly developing and emerging through the process of interaction between the self and this expanding environment? Individuals must be prepared to engage in a continual process of decision-making to maintain responsible control over their own lives because of the ever increasing variety of attitudes, values, and life-styles that are becoming part of the "domain of choice."

Children are more aware of the many elements of their environment than ever before. Mass media, family mobility, and educational systems that stress exposure and experience all contribute to this awareness of an ever increasing range of possible behaviors. Preteenagers and adolescents are faced with choices earlier and in a more intense manner than ever before. Drugs, sex, morals, values, occupational choice, relationships, and identity all must be grappled with. Neither is the adult freed from the necessity of choosing. Social awareness developed through education and the media impede acting in ignorance or irresponsibly. The economy, occupational evolution, increased leisure time, and value changes continually force adults to reassess themselves and their life-styles.

The common element needed for successful resolution in all these cases is the ability to make good decisions based on accurate self-knowledge and knowledge of the environment. Victor Frankl once observed that "man ultimately decides for himself". As such education or any learning experience must move human beings toward having the "ability to decide."

The development of decision-making skills including the processes of introspection, communication, and relationship formation are a necessity because only through self-exploration and feedback from others can a person become fully aware of those options and consequences that must be considered in making the best decision possible. Through the process of effective decision-making we as individuals, whatever our age or circumstance, can retain control over our lives and destinies in spite of pressures brought to bear on us by our changing world.

THE NEED FOR GROUP COUNSELING

Groups and group work are peculiarly and uniquely designed to address the problems of living in our contemporary society. Hulse (1985) stated that "against the backdrop of a complex and highly technological world and our needs for connections and support the group emerges as a potentially humanizing force" (p.93). Dies (1985) elaborated noting that the

> heightened individualization of learning and sense of isolation . . . threatens to undermine the sense of personal relatedness that provides the foundation of human interaction. The feeling of universality and cohesiveness and the quality of interpersonal learning. . .of group experiences promise to be effective antidotes to counteract these depersonalizing forces." (p.70)

He continued to state that groups "will be used to rehumanize the educational process for children. . .and revitalize adults who feel alienated in a technological society" (p.71). Conyne, Dye, Gill, Leddick, Moran and Ward (1985) concur with this view and predicted that groups "will become major forces in combatting the increasing depersonalization and anomie that are likely to accompany the computer and 'high tech' revolution" (p.114).

In a practical sense, the counseling group is a valuable tool in helping people improve their ability to make decisions and act in a manner that is personally meaningful, constructive, and socially relevant. The positive aspects of the helping process are incorporated into the group setting, which facilitate the transfer of learning more readily to the ongoing life of the participant. The group counseling process if properly constituted and led meets the demands of an effective learning environment because it is safe, understanding, participating, and approving (Ohlsen, 1977). In addition, the process is directed toward self-exploration, encouraging introspection and feedback so that communication can occur and relationships can develop. Therefore, it establishes the fundamental basis needed to make good decisions.

The group process is also a most appropriate means of meeting the personal needs of individuals who often feel isolated, alienated, confused, frustrated, or lost in a world characterized by change, bureaucracy, and bigness. The group supplies a personal touch to the individual's life, serving as an oasis in the wasteland of an impersonal existence that is often a by-product of scientific and technological advancement. It is a means whereby we as individuals can reconstitute and revitalize the type of personal experience that gives meaning to human existence and generates the impetus to incorporate those experiences into our daily lives.

Group counseling has broad applicability, encompassing the needs of persons from a wide variety of age groups. For individuals who have identifiable problems that are interfering with their lives, group counseling can help them resolve their concerns in a personally responsible and realistic manner. For individuals who do not have specified concerns, the group process can help them improve themselves developmentally and serve as a preventative measure to ensure continued adjustment and personal satisfaction in their lives.

The flexibility of group counseling facilitates adaptability to a broad range of helping environments and programs. It is a relevant means of helping clientele in schools, mental-health centers, correctional institutions, halfway houses, drug treatment programs, employment agencies, welfare programs, and many other organizations whose purpose is to help people with their personal development. It is also an appropriate and effective modality in an organizational sense where the goals are improved productivity and more effective utilization of human resources. (See "Group Work and Organization Development," *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 7(1), February, 1982).

However, the need for group counseling extends beyond the persons or organizations served. A professional need exists to develop group counseling as a vehicle for providing helping services to the counselor's clientele and thereby expanding the counselor's effectiveness. In this age of accountability the counselor must become a visible professional and be willing to demystify the nature of the helping process (Ivey & Alschuler, 1973). Groups can be used to increase client-counselor contact and to extend the role of the counselor by providing services to larger numbers of persons in the schools and in the community (Cottingham, 1973). The group process can be the key to providing the helping process in a manner that will best serve the interests of the clients, the educational or therapeutic staff and setting, the community, and the counseling profession.

THE NEED FOR TRAINING

The success of group counseling is primarily dependent on the ability of a competent leader. Most counselor training programs recognize the need to train future counselors in group procedures and incorporate at least one course in group process into their requirements. However, most counselors complete their training at the master's-degree level with only one or two group courses and possibly some group experience during practicum. (Huhn, Zimpfer, Waltman, and Williamson, 1985). Thus, they venture forth to their jobs with a minimum of training and a maximum of timidity with respect to using groups.

Counselors who were trained prior to the mid-60s and have not subsequently pursued specific additional training in group work also may lack the skills and possibly even the philosophical basis for group counseling. Group-counseling demonstrations, presentations, and professional convention programs serve to promote the group as a viable counseling procedure, but at best their training value is questionable and their impact sporadic. Counselors often come away from these programs with enthusiasm and some new techniques but without the depth necessary to develop functional group programs.

Conyne et al. (1985) flatly stated that inspite of the growing need for groups in our society there is "a disappointingly insufficient supply of well-trained group workers." They also cited poor leadership training as the "single weakest area in the group work field today." (p.113). As a result a great need exists for the development of training programs on graduate, post-graduate and inservice levels to prepare competent group leaders.

Katz (1973) pointed out that an abundance of persons want to participate in experiential groups but few persons are qualified to organize and lead them. Aubrey (1973), in discussing models to expand the effectiveness and role of the counselor, identified the group as the primary means of doing so. In these models the necessity for trained group leaders who can not only lead groups but train others to do so becomes quite apparent. Carroll (1973) in her discussion of the "supracounselor" (a counselor who is expert as a helper and in training others to be helpers) affirmed that need. Thus the task before us and the purpose of this book is to train counselors who have the capacity to be effective in working directly with their clients in group settings and to share their expertise by training others to become effective group leaders.

BASIC TRAINING COMPONENTS

As stated in the Preface, the four basic training prerequisites for becoming an effective group leader are (1) acquisition of cognitive knowledge and information about the group process, (2) experiential involvement as a participant in the group process, (3) development of skills and techniques to use in a leadership capacity, and (4) supervised experience in the leadership role.

Cognitive knowledge is necessary to provide the counselor with a philosophical, theoretical, and technical understanding of the group process. This information encompassing group theory, dynamics, and process serves the counselor well in terms of understanding and directing the group process and in describing its nature to others. Often cognitive awareness of goals and dynamics of group counseling is required by prospective group members and other significant persons before they will agree to participate in or support group counseling as a helping procedure. Similarly, cognitive understanding of the group process and leadership role lays the foundation for self-confidence as a group leader. Reading, listening (class lectures, audio and video tapes, etc.), research projects, and class discussions can provide much of the needed intellectual basis for leading groups. Observation of professional leaders as role models complements the cognitive learning process and was considered by Shapiro and Shapiro (1985) as an essential part of training. Tape series such as Carroll's (1986) "Group Work: Leading in the Here and Now," available from the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) are excellent learning tools. However, a cognitive understanding of the dynamics and process of group work in and of itself is insufficient.

Prospective leaders must complement cognitive learning with ***experiential involvement*** in the group process. This involvement must occur on two levels. First is the "personal involvement" level where prospective leaders become members of an ongoing group process. The process of becoming a good group leader begins within the realm of one's own experience. To fully understand the impact of group pressures and dynamics a necessary procedure is to participate directly in the group process to learn firsthand about the process intended for helping others. Without this kind of experience counselors will lack the depth necessary to give their approach to group leadership personal integrity.

Two types of personal group experience are advisable. The first type is as a member of a counseling group composed of members drawn from a common context. This experience is typically obtained in graduate school as part of group process courses where groups are formed consisting of graduate students who are your peers. The second type of personal group experience is being in a group composed of members drawn from populations that are not relationally connected other than in the the group. Shapiro and Shapiro (1985) identified "personal group therapy" as one of their core training components, and therapy groups are usually composed of members who have no other common relational context. The reason these two types of experiences are recommended is to acquaint potential group leaders with the dynamic differences that ensue when working with related versus non-related group members.

The second level of experiential involvement is "experimental involvement." It is necessary to help prospective leaders learn and understand the ***concepts, skills,*** and ***techniques*** associated with the group process. A laboratory milieu involving experiential learning centering on specific techniques is useful in complementing didactic learning about group process. These experiences help bridge gaps between the cognitive process and personal experience as a group member. They are important in initial training to help leaders enhance their ability and develop a repertoire of methods, techniques, and activities for use in groups. They provide the foundational competencies for effective practice. Once the foundation has been laid, attending group workshops and group presentations at professional meetings and conventions is invaluable to the continued development of leadership competence.

Finally, the old adage "there's no substitute for experience" applies to the group leader. Until the counselor has the opportunity to try out skills and techniques in actual situations, learning is incomplete. The process of obtaining leadership experience should begin in training under ***competent supervision in a group practicum*** or as part of a general practicum or internship. All too often, however, counselors are left on their own to take care of this aspect of their development. This book will describe some possibilities for initial leadership experiences and will make additional suggestions for getting the necessary experience to become a competent group leader.

BOOK FORMAT

The objective of this book is to provide the group leader with the first three prerequisites mentioned above and to initiate the process for realizing the fourth. Each chapter is composed of didactic discussion and experiential activities to complement the discussion. The information included was selected on the basis of its particular relevance to agency, private practice, and educational settings, although its appropriateness for other helping environments is not excluded.

The second criterion in selecting information was practicality because my intent is that this book will have merit on the basis of its usefulness rather than its erudite scholarship or theoretical prowess. Techniques and exercises were chosen or developed on the basis of their applicability to learning and using the group process. Special attention was given to including activities that can be used in training and practice. The hallmark of any good technique is that it substantially aids the group process and at the same time teaches the group members about the group process. Therefore many of the techniques or adaptations of them will be useful to group leaders in conducting their own groups.

Finally, the information and activities can be used in total or in part since much of the emphasis in this book is directed toward utilization. The book is written so that selective usage or manipulation will not interfere with the fluidity of the presentation. Therefore readers are encouraged to complement, supplement, revise, delete, or adjust the concepts and activities of this book to meet their own needs.

STRATEGIES FOR OBTAINING GROUP EXPERIENCE

Strategies for obtaining group experience (second prerequisite) are included in this first chapter because cognitive learning and experiential learning need to proceed hand in hand. In this way prospective leaders are allowed the opportunity to approach their group experience with their own expectations rather than expectations gleaned from reading or lectures. They also begin the process of testing knowledge against experience immediately. Strategies are broken down into two groups, the first directed toward counselor trainees and the second toward practicing counselors who wish to develop their group skills.

Strategies for Counselor Trainees

Most training in group counseling begins with a formal course in group process. Therefore the first strategies discussed are intended for incorporation into a course format, the suggested balance being 50% class and 50% group experience. With the expanded emphasis on training counselors in group work, many programs have implemented "experiential" group process courses extending this 50-50 guideline to a sequence of two courses, one focusing on cognitive learning and the other on experiential learning. The following strategies suggested will still apply but with the added adaptation and advantage that the group process course can be administratively recognized as part and parcel of an instructor's teaching load. The first step is to divide the class into counseling size groups (preferably eight to ten members per group) and organize a schedule of meetings for the entire quarter or semester. A general rule of thumb is to have at least one group meeting for each week of the term.

Group Strategy I: Instructor as Group Leader. This approach requires the leader to wear two hats, as instructor and as group leader. The advantage of this approach is that an immediate integration of the instructor's cognitive expertise and leadership style is realized. He or she becomes both expert and model, which provides the group members with an example of how the two fit together. The disadvantage is that one or the other of the roles may create a block to group members' participation. Similarly the leader may have difficulty switching hats and may experience added pressure if a discrepancy occurs between what he or she says and does.

Group Strategy II: Outside Person as Group Leader. This strategy involves the instructor enlisting the cooperation of trained leaders from among the counseling staff or faculty to lead the group experience part of the class. Sometimes instructors can trade services or responsibilities to facilitate this strategy. If the training program has a doctoral component advanced degree students also can be utilized as group leaders. The advantage of this approach is that group members do not have to struggle with the barrier of the instructor being the leader and can experience the group in a more natural, autonomous manner. As such the experience tends to approximate the manner in which most groups are conducted in field settings, where the counselor has no other role in the lives of group members other than as group leader. The disadvantages of this approach are that instructors lose the opportunity for the more personal contact with students that takes place in the group and have more difficulty assessing student needs in order to gear teaching toward meeting them.

Group Strategy III: Outside Leader, Instructor Observer. This strategy requires the cooperation of a trained leader and a facility that will allow for unobtrusive observation by the instructor (preferably a group room with a one-way mirror and audio system). The distinct feature of this strategy is the incorporation of a feedback session in which the observer shares perceptions of the group interaction for the purposes of educating members and facilitating the group's progress. The feedback sessions if not handled properly can cause difficulties if comments are not made tentatively to allow for discussion and reactions on the part of group members.

This particular strategy lends itself readily to experimentation since the leader and observer can try out new ideas and get immediate feedback as to their relevance and meaning. As a result professional growth is stimulated for both the instructor and the leader.

Group Strategy IV: Leaderless Group, Instructor Observer. The basic advantages of this method are that the instructor does not have to depend on outside help and that less time is involved since more than one group can be going at a time. The same types of facilities are necessary as for Strategy III but the group functions without a designated leader. Structuring or nonstructuring is the prerogative of the instructor. Feedback sessions at the end of each session or in separate sessions are also important. The instructor can keep pace with group members' experience, provide important insights, intervene when necessary, and structure teaching around group progress. The disadvantage is that the group does not have a designated leader to provide a model or supply expertise to help develop the flow of group interaction. In addition, less similarity occurs to the nature of the groups used in professional settings that tend to follow a leader-member group model.

Group Strategy V: Required Participation in an Outside Group. Basically this strategy requires class members to participate in a group-counseling experience outside of class as a supplement to their learning in the course. If this strategy is used the instructor should screen and approve class members' choices to ensure greater relevance to the course. The instructor also may locate groups and then allow class members to choose from an approved list. The advantage of this approach is that the range of class members' group experiences are broader, and if the instructor can facilitate discussion of these experiences without breaking the confidentiality of the various groups, the result is very positive. In addition, it is usually beneficial to have members keep journals of their experiences and then discuss them with the instructor in the light of course content. (Regardless of the strategy chosen the journal idea is a good one because it helps group members consolidate their experiences and integrate them with their cognitive learning). The disadvantage of this strategy is the complete lack of contact with the actual experience of the group members and that even when the preceding guidelines are followed the experiences chosen or obtained may not be relevant.

Group Strategy VI: Designated Leader, Instructor Participant/Observer. The format of this strategy entails designating leaders from among the group trainees as an added dimension to their experiential learning. As designated leaders for one or more sessions (co-leader also can be used) trainees obtain firsthand experience in the leadership role whetting their appetites for further experience and initiating the process of deciphering differences between member and leader roles in the group. The instructor may opt to participate and/or observe incorporating feedback to the designated leader(s) as part of the follow-up session. The disadvantages of this strategy are that the group process may become disjointed as leadership is rotated and the members do not get an experienced leader as a role model. These disadvantages tend to outweigh the advantage of a brief leadership experience for the trainees.

Group Strategy VII: Structured vs. Non-Structured Group Leadership. This strategy is more a modification of Strategy I (Instructor as Group Leader) than an alternative. The group process is divided into two parts, the first in which the leader takes a facilitative, non-directive role and the second in which the leader structures group interaction using communication exercises and directed focus activities to generate group interaction. This strategy gives members a sense of where they function best relative to the structure-non-structure continuum both as individuals and as potential group leaders. The disadvantage is that of administration and orchestration rather than experience. Some instructors resolve this dilemma by incorporating structured activities into the cognitive portion of the course using experiential activities to demonstrate group concepts and dynamics.

Additional Considerations. Whenever the group experience is organized around subgroups of an entire class the very nature of group experience could cause factionalism. The instructor in approaching the class must take this into account, organizing class experiences that tend to offset the tendency toward "group cliques." Changing the environment also may be a useful idea in organizing the group experiences. Sometimes changing rooms for class and group helps ease the transition from one experience to the other.

Strategies for Counselors

Counselors who wish to develop their experiential background for leading groups sometimes have a difficult time arranging experiences due to lack of time in their own schedules and lack of opportunities in their immediate environment. However, the following suggestions might facilitate obtaining desired experiences. The first possibility is to take a graduate-level group course, either by audit or on a regular basis. Prior to enrolling the counselor should check with the instructor to determine the amount and types of experiences that can be expected.

Group courses can be selected from a variety of fields, including counselor education, psychology, sociology, and human relations. When group-process courses are selected from fields outside of counselor education, counselors may have to rely on their experiences and previous training for adapting and applying the course information and experience to their own settings and use. The advantage of selecting courses from counseling related fields is that counselors may be able to apply credits earned toward a further degree or pay increments on a salary schedule while at the same time improving their professional skill. The advantage of a counselor-education group course is the direct relationship the course has to the counselor's role in the agency, school or private practice setting in which he or she works. It provides the opportunity for the immediate integration of training and practice.

Many counselors choose to pursue group experiences in noneducational settings such as mental-health programs, training institutes, or private organizations that provide group experiences on a per-person cost basis. Examples of these latter programs are National Training Laboratory (NTL) programs, Esalen Institute type programs, Western Behavioral Science Institute, and a host of private agencies that specialize in some form of group-process training. Professional organizations such as the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) and AACD of which the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) is a division sponsor regional and national training programs as part of their continuing education thrust some of which leads to a credential in group leadership. Whenever one of these programs is selected counselors should again determine the nature of the experience and assess its relevance to their own settings prior to becoming involved. This requires professional judgment as well as a cognitive grasp of the group process prior to investigating the various group programs offered.

Inservice training in group process may be the most viable and relevant means of obtaining group experience. The counselor can organize a group of professionals interested in learning the group counseling process and then bring in an outside consultant who has the most appropriate credentials and experience to serve as group leader. The advantages of this approach are numerous. There is a greater assurance that the desired experience and the resulting experience will be similar because the counselor has some input into the organization and the selection of the leader. Cooperation between the educational setting and the group leader's university or organization is facilitated, increasing the amount of input from outside experts and stimulating the professional life of the counselors and the staff. Since the program is organized in the field setting, the time involved is reduced and attendance is more convenient. Administrators look favorably on programs such as this and may provide financial support for the group leader and salary reinforcement to the participants. Inservice programs have some inherent disadvantages including lack of interest and motivation due to fatigue of the participants and difficulty in locating an expert who will be stimulating and relevant at a price that can be afforded. However, careful planning directed toward meeting the need for effective group-counseling programs and wise selection of the consultant can overcome these difficulties.

SELECTED REFERENCES ON TRAINING GROUP WORKERS

When the first edition of this text was published (1977), group work as a therapeutic modality was evolving to a position of prominence in the helping professions. The thrust of that evolution was based primarily on the process relevance of groups and the experienced effectiveness of their impact. This second edition is presented at a time when the training of group workers is emerging as a predominant need and trend in order to catch up with and accommodate to the momentum that the group work field has attained. The following references are included as representative of the "state of the art" relative to training in group work. For that reason, references are listed chronologically rather than alphabetically to capture the developmental aspect of training group workers. The first set of references pertain to courses and training models. The second set of references reflect a broader view of training encompassing training standards and issues and the current characteristics of training programs.

References included were selected primarily from the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* (JSGW) which is emerging as "one of the leading scholarly publications in the field of small group work" (Hayes, 1987, p.1). This was done to highlight the emerging sophistication in group leader training from the perspective of one representative group of qualified professionals in the group field.

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CHAPTER 2

DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

A Group Is A Group (Or Is It?)

Each one of us spends a significant portion of our lives in groups: Family groups, work groups, neighborhood groups, church groups, social groups—the list could go on ad infinitum. Periodically, in the course of our interaction in these groups, we find ourselves sharing or disclosing personal information about our hopes or disappointments, joys or pain, problems or achievements. These disclosures may emanate from the turmoil or excitement within ourselves, from the stresses or circumstances that propel us, from the perceived amenability to sharing observed or experienced in the nature of the group itself or some combination of all three. What triggers these disclosures are the rudiments upon which the group process as a helping modality is built.

Vignettes of naturally occurring group counseling interactions abound:

> Jane, a 31 year old mother of two, discloses to three neighborhood women friends that she has discovered a lump in her breast and is scared to death to tell her husband or go to the doctor.
>
> Bill, a 43 year old middle-manager who car pools to the office gets into the car angry on Monday morning and proceeds to tell the passengers about an argument

he and his wife had over the weekend which continued unresolved right up to the point he got in the car.

Diane, an executive secretary, gathers each day for coffee break with other women in similar positions in the corporation. A main topic of conversation evolves to female issues so they name this group "OVA" and make efforts to get together outside office hours.

Dierdre at age 16 talks enthusiastically and intensely about her new boy friend with her group of three or four close friends.

Billy, age 5, tells his playmates at his pre-school that his parents are getting a divorce.

Jim, 22 and in his first year of teaching, receives an offer for a three year doctoral fellowship and talks it over with fellow teachers in the teachers' lounge asking, "What should I do?"

Ben talks excitedly with a group of co-workers about the birth of his new daughter.

All of these examples reflect the helping nature and capacity of groups, but what distinguishes a counseling or therapy group from these or any other personally meaningful group interactions? Answering that question is the focus of this chapter.

GENERAL NATURE OF GROUPS

The purpose of this chapter is to define group counseling and to discuss the characteristics that distinguish it and give it an identity of its own in the broad spectrum of group processes. To accomplish this purpose we first must look at the general nature of groups so we can develop some guidelines for delimiting the context in which we will consider group counseling.

Slavson (1952) stated that a group consists of "at least three persons because it is the third and succeeding persons who introduce problems and stresses that do not ordinarily exist in two person relationships" (p.223). This definition denotes the minimum number of persons required for the group process to occur and distinguishes a group from a dyadic relationship (for example, individual counseling) based on the inclusion of group dynamics. With three or more persons new forces and pressures are introduced into the group as members attempt to relate, communicate, and achieve objectives. The interaction becomes more complex, communication is more difficult to follow, and control is less easily obtained.

Coalitions can now form precipitating the formation of subgroups, and the emergence of multiple member roles occurs (e.g. in a three person interaction you can have a message-sender, a message-receiver and an observer of the transaction). These dynamics escalate with expanding group size necessitating the establishment of an optimal group size at which the type of group process involved in group counseling operates. This is a much more difficult task because no clear basis exists for determining a specific number above which a group becomes impersonal or nontherapeutic, that point beyond which an individual's identity is submerged or lost in the group.

Some guidelines are available to help us determine a general perspective on the optimal group size necessary to maintain personal and therapeutic group interaction. Homans (1950) defined a therapeutic group as a "number of persons who communicate with one another over a span of time and who are few enough so that each person is able to communicate with others, not at second hand through other people, but face to face" (p.1). This definition stresses the importance of groups maintaining a size where members can communicate directly and personally with one another. A therapeutic group must be small enough so that the identity of the individual is preserved and each member has some degree of reciprocal influence on each other (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971). When a group becomes so large or develops a style of communication that prohibits personal and direct contact between members, its therapeutic nature is severely restricted.

A maximum size limit depends to some extent on the purposes and type of group involved, the nature and maturity of the group members, and/or the experience and expertise of the group leader. However, once a group exceeds a range of eight to twelve members the therapeutic atmosphere and impact becomes proportionally less evident. A general rule of thumb relative to an effective group size is 5-12 members (Roark & Roark, 1979). Specifically by age group, recommended group size is (1) elementary school age, 4 to 6 members; (2) middle school to junior high age, 6 to 8 members; (3) high school age, 8 to 10 members; and (4) young adult to adult age, 8 to 12 members. Group size will be addressed more specifically in Chapter 9, but in general we will be considering a group size of three to twelve members as the range within which the group-counseling process eventuates.

GROUP-COUNSELING DEFINITION

A comprehensive and operational definition of group counseling must include comments on the following components: process, atmosphere (climate) of the group, purpose (focus), membership, and leadership. With these components in mind let's turn our attention to the definition of group counseling as it will be used throughout this book. This definition is designed to answer the three basic questions-What?, Who?, and Why?—with respect to group counseling.

What?: Group counseling is the development of an interpersonal network.

This network is what creates the atmosphere and milieu necessary for the helping process to work. The ingredients that are essential to a therapeutic relationship must therefore be present in the interaction between the leader and group members. These characteristics include trust, acceptance, respect, warmth, communication, and understanding.

Trust is basically the experience of feeling safe and secure in sharing one's self with others without fear of rejection or reprisal. It involves both trusting others and being trustworthy. The development of trust is the cement that secures confidentiality into place as the cornerstone of the group process.

Acceptance is the quality of being allowed to be freely yourself regardless of problems you have in your life. Victor Hugo captured the essence of this characteristic when he stated that "the supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved, loved for ourselves or rather, loved in spite of ourselves."

Respect is the willingness to relate to one another based on the uniqueness and inherent worth and dignity of each person and the commonality of humanness we all share. Yalom (1985) referred to the connectedness of human experience as the principle of "universality". The quotation "every man is in certain respects like all other men, like some other men, like no other man" expresses the thought very clearly. John Ruskin, the English literary critic, accentuated the importance of respect for the worth of each person when he noted "the weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him and which worthily used will be a gift to his race forever."

Warmth is the human capability that is best described as unconditional positive regard. It combines the elements of caring, nonpossessive love, prizing, and liking and is difficult to measure except in terms of one's own experience and feelings. Its presence is completely dependent on the sensitivity of each person to recognize and receive it and the ability of each person to feel and express it.

Communication is also a necessary relational factor in that it provides the means whereby meaningful interaction between persons is facilitated. The type of communication referred to here is two-way communication in which all persons involved have the desire and ability to initiate, respond, and receive in the communication process (Johnson, 1972; Johnson & Johnson, 1982; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971).

The final ingredient is ***understanding,*** referred to by Rogers (1961) as empathy and Truax and Carkhuff (1967) as accurate empathy. Understanding is the ability to see things from the other person's frame of reference, to be able to step into another person's shoes but at the same time maintain your own identity and reality. Rogers (1952) felt that the ability to "listen with understanding" removes barriers in communication that often develop from our tendency to evaluate communications we receive. If we are successful in creating relationships within the group characterized by these qualities, a therapeutic or helping atmosphere will be the end product.

Who?: A counselor and several clients come into contact.

This aspect of our definition gives the principals involved in the process. The counselor is a person with professional training in guidance, counseling and/or psychotherapy who has specific competence as a group leader (Cohn, 1967). In this sense he or she is the "more knowing" person in the group who combines professional expertise and personal commitment to help the clients. The clients are considered "less knowing" individuals because they are experiencing problems and concerns that, for reasons unknown to them, they have not been able to resolve on their own. Feelings of being unable to cope or at least the discomfort of having problems they can't resolve supply the impetus for convening the group (Trotzer, 1975).

Ultimate responsibility for leadership is on the shoulders of the counselor although each counselor's personality will determine the nature or style of leadership and the amount of responsibility shared by the group members. Counselors have responsibility "to" the clients in that they use their expertise, knowledge, and personality to facilitate the group process and help the clients whenever possible and to protect or defend their well-being if that becomes necessary. However, the counselor is not responsible "for" the clients since the members are individually responsible for decisions, actions, and changes in their own lives.

Why?: In order to help each other confront unsatisfactory or problem areas in each client's life and discover, understand, and implement ways of resolving these problems and/or dissatisfactions.

The focus of group counseling is on problems. It is oriented toward helping members express and explore their difficulties and concerns in an effort to use the group's resources to find ways of overcoming difficulties and living more fulfilled and satisfying lives. This integration of process and purpose is a prominent element in our definition. Process involves two basic phases: the first is charaterized by relationship development that leads to self-disclosure and understanding of one's problems, and the second is associated with action directed toward resolving the problems. During the action phase the client uses the group to help him or her discover alternatives, evaluate their implications and probability of success, and then practice and implement them to solve the problem. Thus the purpose of group counseling is to deal directly with client difficulties, weaknesses, frustrations, problems, concerns, and dissatisfactions in an effort to remove them as factors impeding the client's growth, development, and personal fulfillment. The unique aspect of group counseling is the "helping each other" process, which will be discussed in greater depth a little later in this chapter. The definition in total then is:

> Group counseling is the development of an interpersonal network characterized by trust, acceptance, respect, warmth, communication, and understanding through which a counselor and several clients come in contact in order to help each other confront unsatisfactory or problem areas in the clients' lives and discover, understand and implement ways of resolving these problems and/or dissatisfactions (Trotzer, 1972).

This definition differentiates counseling or therapy groups from other group experiences or interactions based on the mobilization of interpersonal human resource potential in relation to a helping objective. Several key points are emphasized. As an "interpersonal network" the counseling group represents a human process reflective of the domain of human relationships in which members are experiencing their problems.

Second, the traits of that therapeutic network only have meaning in a relational context. Trust, acceptance, respect, warmth, communication, and understanding can only be experienced if interpersonal relationships are present. Third, there is a built-in interpersonal growth dynamic in that the process depends on members helping each other. And finally, the focus and purpose of the group are explicit. Counseling groups are initiated for the purpose of problem-solving. As such the counseling group represents a temporary interventive modality in each group member's life, the therapeutic impact and duration of which is governed by the intention on the part of both leaders and members to dissolve the group by resolving the problems (Trotzer, 1985).

ADVANTAGES OF GROUP COUNSELING

Advantages of groups can be considered from several perspectives. The first is in contrast to individual counseling, noting those helping characteristics the group can provide that are not readily available to the counselor in one-to-one relationships. Second is the perspective that views group counseling as an entity in and of itself with its own merit and advantageous characteristics. Third is the viewpoint that presents advantages but takes particular care to define the qualifications and conditions under which they operate and limits that must be observed to prevent an asset from becoming a liability. All three of these vantage points will be incorporated into our succeeding discussion.

The reader should keep in mind that different group approaches may emphasize different positive qualities of the group process. For all advantages to be evident at some time during the group process is plausible however what is more likely is that only a few will be consistently prominent. The following list of advantages is comprehensive in nature encompassing a broad spectrum of approaches rather than a definitive list of advantages characterizing every group approach.

Safety Factors in Groups

Group counseling provides group members with an automatic camouflage if they desire to use it. Due to the fact that each member of the group is a client, an initial feeling of safety exists because the probability of being the center of attention decreases in direct proportion to the size of the group. In addition the feeling that "in numbers there is strength" also is present and these assumptions are often enough to encourage group members to embark on the journey toward working on their problems in the group. Members often are more willing to discuss feelings, concerns, attitudes, and beliefs in groups of peers than in individual counseling (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971). In fact, Ohlsen (1970) pointed out that "some clients find it easier to discuss difficult subjects in group counseling" than in one-to-one counseling (p.5).

The climate of the group generated by the relationships formed is also a factor in members feeling safe. In the first place, relationships are developed in an atmosphere of "controlled intimacy," which reduces the risk in forming relationships and the contingent obligations that usually result from them (Mahler, 1969). Secondly, members have a natural feeling that fellow clients will accept them and empathize with them, which makes facing up to problems and weaknesses safer (Ohlsen, 1977).

Problems can result from these safety factors. Individual members can successfully lose themselves in the group and never have to confront their problems. When this occurs the "safety in numbers" influence undermines the helping process. Another problem results when the group becomes so safe nothing is risked and therefore no action toward resolving problems is taken (Vorrath, n.d.). When either of these two situations arises the group leader must take steps to create a dynamic tension in the group or confront the group to activate the helping process once again.

Sense of Belonging

William James (1890) once wrote:

> We are not only gregarious animals liking to be in sight of our fellows, but we have an innate propensity to get ourselves noticed, and noticed favorably, by our kind. No more fiendish punishment could be devised were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof.(p.293)

The enticement of group counseling is that it spawns the conditions that enable both the "noticing" to occur and the "ignoring" to be avoided.

Lakin (n.d.) pointed out that one of the key distinctions between individual and group psychotherapy is that the group has the capacity to provide members with an experience of "belongingness." Thus the group member has the opportunity to feel a part of a social group, one of our essential needs as human beings. While deep intimacy and closeness are still the bailiwick of the dyadic relationship, the group can provide social support in the form of group identity, which can never be an element of the one-to-one relationship. When members experience acceptance, understanding, and cohesiveness in the group, they begin to realize they are important and worthwhile. They feel they need the group and are wanted by the group, which is the essence of belonging. The key dynamic operating here is that (1) groups help individuals create their personal identity, and (2) individuals influence the traits that groups exemplify. The interaction of these two processes helps members find belongingness, which provides them with the support they need to work on improving themselves.

The problem presented by the group's belongingness factor is that members may lose sight of the fact that the counseling group is intended to be transitional in nature rather than permanent. In other words, group counseling is not a process designed to give group members a permanent social group within which to operate and meet their needs. Rather the group is a temporary stopping-off place where members can regroup themselves for the purpose of living more effective lives in their regular environments. The element of belonging is only useful as it aids the member in achieving a better life outside the group. A derivative of this same problem is that the sense of belonging may also be a manipulative tool in the hands of the members or the leader. Careful attention must be given to whether its impact is constructive or simply a power play used by the group to dominate individual members.

Social Value of Group Counseling

In the literature is clear consensus that group counseling has definite social qualities that make it particularly relevant for helping people solve their problems. Groups by their very nature tend to take on social characteristics representing the environment in which they are formed. Individual members through their input into the group represent the broader society in which their learning and experiences have occurred

(Trotzer, 1975). Gazda (1968) referred to this phenomenon when he stated that the group is "a microcosm of social reality" (p.1). Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) called the group a "reflection of society as a whole" (p.60). Hinckley and Herman (1951) commented that the group resembles "true-life situations" where dependence and independence are constantly interchanging, and Vorrath (n.d.) stressed the role of the group as an "ongoing community." In all cases the affirmation is that groups are "minisocieties," which reflect to some degree the reality of the outside world.

Very early in my work as a individual therapist I realized a major discrepancy existed between what happened in the counselor's office and the client's life. The best laid plans tended to go awry once the client encountered the expectational pressures of their real world. Consequently the necessity of upgrading the transferability potential in counseling became paramount. The social environment of the counseling group does just that. In group counseling an inherent transitional value bolsters the probability of successful implementation of change outside the group. This "transferability dynamic" is a major therapeutic asset.

The group then is a valuable tool in the hands of a trained counselor because it is a social laboratory where results obtained have transitional properties to implement in real life. The group has the advantage of being a laboratory where individuals are able to understand the social meaning of behavior because it is being reviewed in a social context (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971). Since we as human beings are social by nature, to fully understand our actions is difficult if we divorce them completely from the social milieu. The group can retain this dimension, while individual counseling must depend almost entirely on verbal description to account for it. The group atmosphere provides the opportunity for members to learn more about themselves because it gives them a broader social mirror in which to view themselves than individual counseling.

The group is an arena where social comparisons can be made and evaluated. Members have the advantage of practicing behavioral and attitudinal changes prior to attempting them in real-life situations. This process, called "reality testing," is a key ingredient in the successful resolution of problems. Members can assess the probability of success by using the group as a sounding board in formulating, developing, and evaluating alternatives. By using the group in this way members also can develop the self-confidence needed to implement the changes outside the group.

The extent to which groups are representative of society is difficult to determine and for this reason must be carefully considered in the interaction of any group. Lakin (n.d.) warns that groups are not only capable of defining social reality but are capable of defining it in such a way that it is distorted. When this occurs the resulting perceptions and changes may in fact be detrimental to problem resolution rather than therapeutic.

An example of "reality distortion" occurred in an adolescent girls' counseling group where group members in response to one girl's disclosure of her loneliness and desire for a boyfriend coerced a boy to invite her to a dance. This was done outside the group without the knowledge of the group leader. The girl was noticeably overweight and when the two appeared at the dance, the boy became subject to cat calls and snide remarks with negative innuendos. He became embarrassed and made an impulsive decision to leave the girl standing alone in the middle of the dance floor thus devastating her already fragile sense of self esteem. The group had failed to consider the reality factors in attempting to respond helpfully to the girl's problem as they perceived it. Leaders are responsible for preventing reality distorting situations from occurring and must be willing to bear the negative reactions of members when they try to maintain a realistic focus in the group.

Group as Power

The aspect of group process that triggers the most varied and intense reaction is its power. Agreement is plentiful that the group process is powerful, however, no end is in sight regarding the controversy as to if and how that power should be used to change persons' lives. To review this subject is beyond the scope of this book, therefore we will turn our attention to the issue of power in the context of group counseling. Suffice it to say that the influence of groups and group dynamics is inevitable in each of our lives, and our task is to define those elements that make the group-counseling process a beneficial tool in the hands of the counselor.

The power of the group centers around peer-group pressure and influence. One of the most important aspects in the development of every person is the reaction of those persons in his or her peer group. This is particularly true during adolescence but is no small matter in the lives of children and adults. Group counseling harnesses this power of the peer group in an effort to make it a constructive influence in helping group members resolve their problems. One of the most surprising revelations that occurs again and again as one works with groups is that individuals in many cases know what they want to do or should do to better themselves but will not act on that knowledge until they feel it is acceptable and valued by their peer group.

The power of the peer group is revealed in the natural tendencies of the group to influence individuals in terms of conformity, identity, reward and punishment, and social controls. In each of these cases the counseling group uses peer-group dynamics to help individual members live more satisfying lives and act constructively in resolving their problems. As a result, the counselor has available vastly expanded resources that can be used in counseling. Individual counseling does not have these resources directly available since the counselor is usually not a member of the client's peer group and is not in a position to engage significant peers in the counseling process. Peer influence therefore becomes the vehicle of change in the group-counseling process. Vorrath (n.d.) felt this is such an important aspect of the group process that he built his entire approach to working with delinquents around it.

In addition to the forces already mentioned, the use of peer-group dynamics provides a buffer zone between the adult world and the child or adolescent. Ohlsen (1974) gave a brief description of how it works:

> When some members of the group fail to act, other members can put pressure on reluctant actors without arousing the defensiveness that results when parents and teachers pressure adolescents to behave differently.(p.144)

This process helps bridge the generation gap by improving communication. Group members can say the same things and require the same things that adults would but without the contingent emotional reaction. Among adults this same phenomenon can be observed based on the distinction of emotional involvement. The same input that would be resisted or rejected out of hand when given by spouses, bosses, close friends, or parents of adult children is received as revelation, insight, or helpful when obtained from a non-involved third party of the same age or role category.

As with any source of power the group's power also can be abused and destructive. If peer pressure is directed toward achieving unrealistic goals or used to force individuals into actions detrimental to themselves or others, the group leader must take steps to intervene. Group pressure is only beneficial if it facilitates the process of self-development on the part of individual group members. Its influence should not become the all-consuming power in the client's life. As in the case of belongingness, the group must exert its power to get members out of the group via successful resolution of problems and not attempt to totally immerse them in a process that is an end in and of itself.

Helping and Being Helped

Group counseling provides members with the opportunity to both help and be helped. Lakin (n.d.) credited the availability of this option in the group to the group's capacity to redistribute power. The counselor is not the only one who can aid members and indeed should not be since the members are invaluable resources in the helping process. This characteristic of mutual help more than any other contributes to the appeal of group counseling. In individual counseling, clients seldom if ever have the opportunity to help the counselor. They are always in the position of being the ones with the problems who are being helped. In the group they can still get the help they need but in addition they can maintain and build their self-respect and self-worth through assisting others with their problems. Vorrath (n.d.) stressed this concept of "doing things to help one another" as the key therapeutic element in the group process. The impact of this dynamic creates a spiral effect in the group. As members see help being given or give help, they become more willing to ask for and accept help for themselves. As more members ask for help a greater opportunity exists to be helpful, and so on. Ohlson (1970) added these comments about perceptions of the group member:

> To discover that others are struggling with similar problems makes his own more acceptable; seeing others learn to cope with their problems is encouraging, and helping them increases his respect for himself; thus group counseling. . .enables them (the members) to satisfy some of their strongest needs, especially in providing real assistance to peers while obtaining assistance from them.(p.206)

The only problems with this group-counseling dynamic are associated with the manner and content of the help that is given. In most cases members provide assistance in feedback and alternatives that are realistic and relevant to the concerns of the members being helped. In giving assistance, however, the one being helped must retain the right to weigh and select the alternatives and perceptions that he or she views as most helpful. In that way ultimate responsibility for change is on the shoulders of the member not the group. Also, the leader is responsible for making sure the help given is realistic and that all members have equal access to the group's assistance, intervening when individual members become dominant or isolated with respect to obtaining help in the group.

Self-Correcting Group Dynamics

Counseling and therapy groups have certain inherent self-monitoring and self-correcting tendencies. These tendencies are resources which are naturally available and are mobilized as the flow of group interaction evolves. However, these dynamics are not absolute and can be obliterated or negated by circumstances, events, and conditions that occur in the group. The most prominent of these tendencies is the dual dynamic of countering ostracism and enmeshment in the group. The best illustration of this dynamic is your hand. Attempt to disassociate one finger from the rest of your fingers. As you do so you will feel a natural resistance and a pressure to pull that finger back in thereby reducing the tension. The same phenomenon occurs in groups when one member or several become peripheral or ostracized. The group finds ways of pulling the detaching members back in either by shifting focus or attention or by siding with and defending extruded members.

Now, clench your hand into a fist asserting all the pressure you can to hold it closed. Note that tension once again is evident precipitating an impulse to relax the hand thereby separating its members (the fingers) from such close proximity. The same dynamic occurs in groups when intensity becomes overwhelming. A natural tendency exists on the part of individuals and the group to lighten up. This may be done through humor, a shift in focus, or a direct confrontation of the fact that things are too tight. Members may even suggest physical activities to relieve the stress of becoming so embroiled in the group.

Another self-correcting group trait is "centering" where group members act to draw the group back from tangents or distractions to a theme or focus of personal relevance. Frustration or the desire to "get something out of the group" are motivators for members to get the group to "center." These self-correcting traits are unique to group counseling, not being available at all in individual counseling, and being superceded by homeostatic forces in family counseling. However, they are not sufficient to insure that groups will function therapeutically. Group leaders may rely upon them as the first line of defense against excesses or distortions, but must be ready to intervene if the group does not mobilize them. One of the reasons leaderless groups are vulnerable to non-therapeutic interactions is that the group process generates dynamics that exhaust the natural helping and healing properties of the group allowing negative dynamic processes to emerge unchecked.

Curative Factors in Groups

Yalom (1975) coined the term "curative factors" to describe components of the group process that account for the therapeutic impact of groups. He considers these factors to have a common manifestation across the "entire spectrum of counseling groups among a wide variety of populations." (MacDevitt, 1987, p.76). Based on a foundation of research, clinical practice, and theoretical conceptualization, Yalom (1985) identifies 12 components that characterize therapeutic groups. Summarized by MacDevitt (1987) they are as follows:

1. Altruism: the process of helping others
2. Cohesion: feeling that one truly belongs to the group
3. Catharsis: being able to express feelings and concerns to others
4. Insight: acquiring self-knowledge or self understanding
5. Interpersonal learning-input: receiving feedback from other members
6. Interpersonal learning-output: acquiring interpersonal skills
7. Guidance: receiving advice and suggestions
8. Family reenactment: experiencing and learning from the group as if it were one's family
9. Instillation of hope: being encouraged by seeing that others have solved or are solving their problems
10. Universality: realizing that one is not so different from others
11. Identification: modeling oneself after another member or the therapist
12. Existential factors: realizing important, painful truths about life (pp.76-77).

Together these factors interrelate in such a way to both create conditions for change and generate change. They are interdependent but have properties that allow them to be identified and isolated for conceptualization purposes. As such they account for the distinctive nature of group counseling and are the assets that advocate the use of groups as practical and effective in helping clients.

Spectator Therapy

A derivative of the social laboratory characteristic of group counseling is what Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) called "spectator therapy." Each group member has the opportunity to see someone else talk about a problem similar to her or his own and watch the other member work it through in the group. Thus the members can experience the benefits of the group without revealing their own problems. This is certainly not a characteristic of individual counseling and therefore is unique to the group process. The inherent weakness of this trait is an obvious one-if everyone observes, no one will work on problems, and nothing will be learned by being a spectator.

Feedback for Growth

The nature of communication in group counseling is special because of the opportunity for members to receive multiple feedback. While individual counseling enables the client to receive feedback from an understanding and helpful "expert," the group incorporates both that feedback and feedback from peers. Paraphrasing Cohn (1967) the impact of this process is as follows:

> When persons are placed within the context of a group they cannot continue to rely only upon their own perceptions for a view of themselves. Through the process of group interaction each person comes in contact with the group's perception of what he or she is or what he or she purports to be. Thus it is within the context of the group that each person gains greater self-awareness (p.1).

Group-counseling effectiveness is related to the quantity and quality of the feedback. As members receive feedback about their actions, feelings, and problems they become more clearly aware of the impact of their behavior on others and others' problems and concerns. In addition they find out more about themselves, which gives them a stronger basis on which to make decisions beneficial to their lives.

Groups must guard against using feedback in a destructive or personally damaging manner. When used for the purpose of ostracizing, scapegoating, or criticizing with no positive purpose in mind, the person and the group process are damaged. Groups must establish guidelines for feedback (see Figure 2.1), and the leader must act to facilitate positive use of feedback while safeguarding individuals and the group from using it negatively.

Personalizing the Learning Process

The group process by its very nature enhances the learning process (Hulse-Killacky, 1986). Therefore, group counseling is especially helpful in educational settings because it contributes to the personalization of the learning process by providing an environment in which members can discuss their unique and common problems. It has all the properties of an ideal learning environment in the sense that it has a trained leader, involves peer-group dynamics, and takes into account individual differences of the group members. The focus is personal and problem-oriented, and members are given the opportunity to deal responsibly with themselves and their concerns (Trotzer, 1972). Immediate integration occurs with the education process because members are encouraged to discover more effective methods of living their lives.

Group counseling presents a helpful alternative to students who have difficulty functioning in the less personal environment of the classroom or who shy away from the intensity of individual counseling. By working on problems in group counseling, individuals realize the school has the resources for helping them and has a personal interest in them. This creates a greater personal commitment to the school and the educational process in general. Thus group counseling is a means of maximizing the educational process by making contact with the personal lives of students in a manner that is meaningful to both parties in the learning relationship-the student and the school.

GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK

Feedback is a way of helping others to consider changing their behavior. It is communication to a person (or a group) giving that person information about how he or she affects others. Like a guided-missile system, feedback helps individuals keep behavior on target and thus achieve their goals. It is a shared corrective mechanism for the individual who wants to learn how well behavior matches intentions. The following guidelines for giving feedback were listed by David W. Johnson in his book entitled *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualization* on pages 16-17.[1]

1. Focus feedback on behavior rather than on the person.
2. Focus feedback on observations rather than inferences.
3. Focus feedback on description rather than judgment.
4. Focus feedback on descriptions of behavior that are in terms of "more or less" rather than in terms of "either-or."
5. Focus feedback on behavior related to a specific situation, preferably to the "here and now," rather than on behavior in the abstract, placing it in the "there and then."
6. Focus feedback on the sharing of ideas and information rather than on giving advice.
7. Focus feedback on exploration of alternatives rather than on giving advice.
8. Focus feedback on the value it may have to the receiver, not on the value of "release" that it provides the person giving the feedback.
9. Focus feedback on the amount of information that the person receiving it can use rather than on the amount that you have, which you might like to give.
10. Focus feedback on time and place so that personal data can be shared at appropriate times.
11. Focus feedback on what is said rather than on why it is said.

Figure 2.1. Guidelines for feedback.

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[1] From *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualization*, by D.W. Johnson. Copyright © 1972 by Prentice-Hall, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

The personalizing of learning aspect of groups extends beyond the educational domain. Groups conducted in agencies and private practice settings provide participants with a host of opportunities for personalized learning about themselves and their problems. A growing trend in business and industry is to use groups called "quality circles" to enhance productivity and improve efficiency and morale essentially by using the group as an environment to facilitate workers learning from each other-all in the best interests of the company. In a sense the applicability of group process has no limit to enchance learning.

Increasing Counselor Contact

Since its inception, group counseling has always been promoted as a means of increasing the amount of counselor-client contact and thereby expanding the impact of the counselor's professional role. The only logical conclusion is that if a counselor effectively spends one hour per week with eight clients in a group as opposed to one hour per week with each of those clients, he or she will choose the group approach. That decision makes for the most efficient use of counselor time.

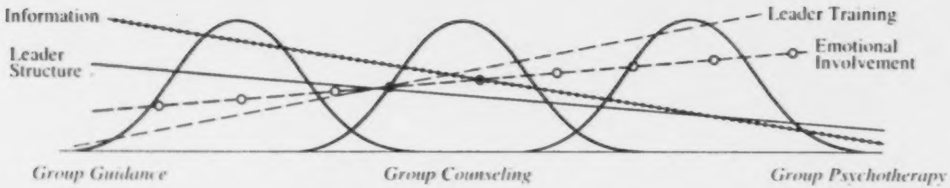
Strangely enough, though, group counseling still does not have the unequivocal support from counselors, adminstrators, and counselor educators that individual counseling does. Part of the reason for this is lack of training and training programs (Conyne et al., 1985; Carroll, 1985; Shapiro and Shapiro, 1985). But the more important reason seems to be a complex problem of hesitancy regarding the group process and lack of motivation to try it on the part of counselors. Inevitably actual priorities in guidance, counseling and psychotherapy programs place group counseling low on the list regardless of its position idealistically. However, this trend is changing and with the communication of more and more success stories (Aubrey, 1973) counselors are beginning to use groups more effectively. If this trend continues advantages of greater counselor-client contact and expanded counselor role will finally be realized.

GROUP GUIDANCE, GROUP COUNSELING, AND GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY

The definition of group counseling would not be complete without a discussion of its relationship to group guidance and group psychotherapy. In Figure 2.2 are presented a graphic illustration of the relationship between these three group processes and details on essential characteristics of each one. You will notice overlap between group guidance and group counseling and between group counseling and group psychotherapy. These processes are not mutually exclusive entities but are on a continuum. Although we can identify specific characteristics that generally apply to each process, in practice some degree of commonality does exist. The group leader, therefore, must maintain a flexible attitude in working with these processes and recognize that their characteristics are fluid rather than rigid.

Group guidance is the process of providing personally relevant information of a developmental nature to group members. This information may be in terms of facts and figures, procedures, requirements, or skills necessary to help them in their lives. The focus of the process is decidedly cognitive in nature with emphases on environmental factors, content, and topics. Methods are usually centered on presentation and discussion with the leader taking the primary responsibility for organizing and directing the groups. Although members should collaborate in selecting topics that are in line with their interests and needs, Mahler (1969) pointed out that "in schools group guidance is usually oriented toward telling students what adults think the youngsters should know about themselves" (p.11). The most common themes involve teaching coping skills and supplying information that facilitates understanding of self, others, and the environment to enhance the prospect of effective adjustment in group members and help individuals more fully realize and apply their human potential (Robinson, 1980).

The main emphasis in group guidance is dealing with people on the basis of their developmental status in life. As such the process takes on dimemsions of being preventative



Group Guidance

1. Preventative
2. Developmental
3. Personally relevant information
4. Cognitive
5. Environmental emphasis
6. Presentation and discussion
7. Leader directed
8. Topic-oriented
9. Planned activities
10. Skills
11. Common goals

Group Counseling

1. Remedial
2. Normal individuals
3. Thoughts, feelings, and behavior evaluated
4. Problem-oriented
5. Focus determined by members
6. Situational (organized as needed)
7. Relationship important
8. Empathy and support stressed
9. Tendency toward homogeneity (common problems)
10. Verbal techniques
11. Feelings and needs emphasized
12. Conscious awareness
13. Leader facilitates
14. Present-oriented
15. Nonmedical setting
16. Relatively short longevity

Group Psychotherapy

1. Reconstructive, reeducative or rehabilitative
2. Personality change
3. Focused support
4. Past history included
5. Conscious and unconscious awareness
6. Deep neurotic conflicts, deviant behavior, or severe emotional problems
7. Individuals considered sick or mentally ill
8. Long duration
9. Homogeneous or heterogeneous
10. High emotional involvement
11. Depth analysis and exploration
12. Primarily verbal techniques
13. Individual development primary
14. Leader facilitates and directs as needed

Figure 2.2. Group Guidance, Group Counseling, and Group Psychotherapy. (Material for this diagram was collected from these sources: Mahler, 1969; Ohlsen, 1970 and 1974; Goldman, 1962; Gazda, Duncan, and Meadows, 1967; Dinkmeyer and Muro, 1971; Schmidt, N.D. DATE; Trotzer, 1975. Partially adapted from L.M. Brammer and E.L. Shostrom, 1976, *Therapeutic Psychology: Fundamentals of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976. Reprinted by permission.

and facilitative in nature. Group members often know what they want to do but don't know how to do it. Efforts are directed toward supplying members with essential skills and information that will enable them to address current developmental tasks and prevent or circumvent problems in the future. The primary by-product of such groups is effective decision-making based on relevant knowledge of one's self and one's environment. The different types of guidance groups are discussed in detail in Chapter 8, and more specific examples are included there.

In contrast to group guidance, ***group counseling*** is primarily remedial in nature. It deals with normal individuals who are experiencing problems that are interfering in some respect with their lives. As a result, the development of a group relationship characterized by empathy and support is stressed where members can evaluate their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in a safe yet social environment. Counseling groups are formed in light of certain problems and therefore tend to be homogeneous in nature. Members are organized into groups that discuss problems with which they can identify, at least to some extent. Groups meet until the problems are solved for the most part and tend to be of relatively short duration. Counseling groups tend to mirror quarter or semester time frames in schools and extend from 3 to 9 months in other settings depending on purpose and organizational format. Members are encouraged to work toward dissolving the group by resolving their problems.

Because of the emphasis on personal problems the focus of the group is determined by the members, and a contingent emphasis on feelings is due to the emotional involvement required to engage in self-disclosure and feedback. The leader is primarily a facilitator who uses verbal techniques, stresses conscious awareness, and keeps the group oriented to the "here and now" problems of group interaction and member concerns (Carroll, 1986). These groups are usually conducted in non-medical settings, such as schools and other helping institutions catering to normal clients.

The distinction between group counseling and ***group psychotherapy*** is associated more with the type of clients than with the process itself. ***Group psychotherapy*** is utilized to work with clients who are nonnormal in some respect. They may be considered sick, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, have psychotic tendencies or deep neurotic conflicts, or engage in deviant behavior. In any event, the causes of the problems are related to personality dynamics and development. Therefore, the purpose is to effect personality change with group effort directed toward reconstructing, reeducating or rehabilitating individual members relative to personality characteristics that are creating problems in their lives. Since the focus is on personality, the process tends to be quite long in duration because personality patterns develop over a long period of time and are therefore resistant to change. Support is necessary to the process but only in the sense of providing it when clients are working on their problems. Often clients in group psychotherapy try to avoid working on their problems because of the effort required to change. If the group supports member actions that are not associated with the task of changing, the whole process is undermined. Therefore support is used as a reinforcement, focusing on encouraging and maintaining individual efforts toward resolving problems.

Group psychotherapy may be composed of either homogeneous or heterogeneous members and is characterized by a high degree of emotional involvement. The leader facilitates or directs as is necessary and uses primarily verbal techniques. Conscious and unconscious awareness, a concern for the past history of the client, and depth analysis and exploration may be involved in the process with the expertise of the leader being essential to the constructive use of these procedures. Groups are organized in medical or institutional settings on an inpatient basis or in clinics, counseling centers, and agencies where referred clients (including self-referred ones) are handled as outpatients.

General trends evident on a continuum from group guidance to group psychotherapy are that the role of cognitive information and the amount of leader structure decreases while the degree of emotional involvement (affect) and required leadership training and expertise increase. In addition, elements of guidance and counseling groups may be integrated into psychotherapy groups and counseling groups often include guidance dimensions. However, when individuals present issues or problems in guidance or counseling groups that significantly derail or distract the intended process referral to the appropriate corresponding entity is in order.

RELATING FOCUS AND PROCESS

In Figure 2.3 is illustrated the relationship between group guidance, group counseling, and group psychotherapy with the basic focus of each process. The essence of every person's identity is the result of continual interaction between personality, thoughts, feelings, behavior, and environment. Personality is the aspect of a person that develops over time and is characterized by a consistency that gives each person a uniqueness unparalleled by any other human being. Personality is composed of the patterns and characteristics that are generally stable and that change at an increasingly slower rate as one matures and grows older. These patterns and traits dictate each person's adjustment to life and the concomitant satisfaction or dissatisfaction that he or she experiences. When a person develops characteristics that consistently and continually create frustration, anxiety, problems, and dissatisfaction, efforts must be made toward changing those traits and developing different or revised characteristics to facilitate satisfactory adjustment. The process of group psychotherapy is directed to that end.

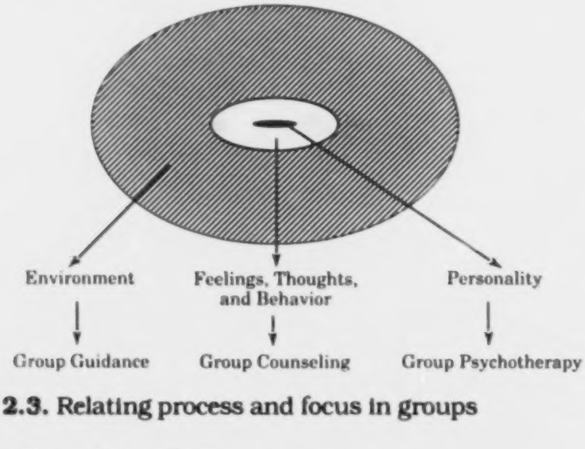


Figure 2.3. Relating process and focus in groups

Thoughts, feelings, and behavior are the three components of one's experience that have the dual role of expressing personality and affecting personality. The characteristic distinguishing these components from personality is their tendency to fluctuate according to situations and experiences one is exposed to. A person often shows markedly different behavior at a party than on the job. Similarly, a person's feelings sometimes change very rapidly with the advent of an unexpected gift or visit from an important person in one's life.

The whole process of education is such that a person often has learning experiences that change the person's thinking in a very short period of time. In any case, the changes occur quickly and can be accounted for by any number of reasons including role demands, expectations, events, circumstances, or inner turmoil. Attesting to the importance of these components as the moderators between one's personality and one's environment is the fact that theories of counseling and psychotherapy focus on them as channels for instituting change in a person's life. For example, Carl Rogers' (1951) Person-Centered Therapy focuses on feelings, William Glasser's (1965) Reality Therapy and Albert Ellis (1971) Rational-Emotive Therapy emphasize thinking and cognitions while behaviorists such as John Krumboltz and Carl Thoreson (1976) zero in on behavior.

Problems occur in people's lives when they cannot adjust to changes in any or all of the three areas. The problem may be the result of a change that occurs too quickly (traumatic events), or is too intense (crisis situation), or is so divergent and varied as to become unsettling to the person. When individuals cannot understand or deal adequately with their thoughts, feelings, or behavior and feel something must be done to rectify the situation, they may look outside themselves for a source of help. Group counseling is one process that can effectively provide the help in a meaningful and constructive manner. Its focus is on evaluating thoughts, feelings, and actions of normal human beings for the purpose of helping them adjust adequately and live more satisfying and productive lives.

Each person lives in an environment or life-space that provides experiences, opportunities, and pressures that must be dealt with to achieve personal fulfillment. To do that individuals must implement decisions based on their knowledge of that environment and the interaction of their own selves with it. Decisions that are based on accurate information about one's self and one's world and include steps to develop the personal skill necessary to carry out those decisions are by far the most rewarding. They accelerate one's progress and achievement and create a more satisfying lifestyle. The process of group guidance is directed at providing the information and skills that are personally relevant and that facilitate the decision-making process in the manner just described.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I. The Nature of Group

The following activities can be used in classes or groups to help members assess the characteristics of groups and the group process. Since their purpose is to integrate experience and cognition, these activities require both involvement and observation on the part of each participant.

A. Building Blocks Dyads (Option 1). This technique is particularly useful in the beginning stages of group development since it encourages getting to know one another and at the same time demonstrates some of the peculiar properties differentiating group and individual dyadic relationships.

Have class members pair off with a person they do not know or know least well in the group. Give them five to ten minutes to get to know each other as best they can. About one-half way through the time allotted, stop the discussion and have each member write down an initial impression of the partner. Then allow the conversation to continue to the end of the stated time period. At the end of the time period form the dyads into groups of four (two dyads to a group) and have the dyad members introduce their partners and give their initial impressions. After each member has been introduced each group can proceed to get better acquainted. At the end of about ten minutes form the groups of four into groups of eight and allow them to get to know each other without any specific directions. After 15 minutes of discussion form the groups of eight into groups of 16 (or some number larger than eight depending on class size) and once again give them about 15 minutes to get to know one another. The total time involved should be about 45 to 60 minutes.

Discuss the experience in terms of the purpose (getting to know one another) and the characteristics revealed about groups and group process. What differences were noted between one-to-one and group relationships? What impact did the size of the group have on the nature of the discussion? Did subgroups retain their identity when merged into a larger group? What happened to communication and to the influence of the individual as groups changed in size?

B. Building Blocks Dyads (Option 2). A variation of the technique just given is to divide the class in half. In one group, follow the procedure described above starting with dyads and then proceeding to four and eight and so on up to the total size of the subgroup. With the other group, reverse the procedure, moving from the large group by one-halves down to two persons. For example, if there are 16 people in the subgroup, your groups would start with 16. Then they would divide into eight, four, and two, in that order. At each level, give the members a personal sharing task to perform. Examples that could be used follow:

1. Share a meaningful experience you have had recently.
2. Share one thing about your personality that you feel is a positive attribute.
3. Share one thing about yourself that you would like to change.
4. Share a problem in your life right now that you have not been able to deal with satisfactorily.
5. Share one negative and one positive thing about your (job, family, school, and so on) that you are aware of right now.

(These types of personal sharing tasks also are useful in group counseling as initiating procedures that help group members interact and get material out on the table to be worked with.)

Allot an appropriate amount of time at each level of interaction so that members have sufficient time to discuss the personal sharing tasks in some depth. After all steps have been completed, conduct a follow-up discussion based on the member's experience in personal sharing, and compare the process and reactions of members in the various sized groups. Contrast the experience of moving from the large group to dyads and from dyads to the large group.

C. Dyads versus Groups (Option 1). To compare the process of individual counseling with group counseling more directly, try the following exercise. Using the personal-sharing tasks previously listed or similar ones, have members of the class pair off and discuss the chosen task in detail. Then divide the class into small groups (six to eight members) and repeat the process using a different personal-sharing task. It is not necessary that persons who were partners in the one-to-one sharing be in the same group. In fact, it is usually a good idea to split them up. Allow plenty of time for discussion in each exercise and then evaluate the experience in terms of the process, communication, and individual reactions.

D. Dyads versus Groups (Option 2). Using the same format as that just described, we can add the dimension of observation. In the first phase use triads (groups of three) instead of dyads. Two persons interact using one of the personal sharing tasks and the third person observes. After an appropriate length of time (10 to 15 minutes) the observers give feedback based on their observations to the two persons who participated in the sharing. This procedure is repeated three times with three different personal-sharing tasks until each person has had the opportunity to be the observer.

For the group phase, use the "fish bowl" approach. Divide the class into groups large enough for each one to be subdivided into two smaller groups of four to eight members each. One small group sits in an inner circle and proceeds to discuss one of the personal-sharing tasks. The other small group sits in an outer circle observing the interaction of the inner groups. Each member in the outer circle should be assigned one person in the inner circle to observe in addition to the group process. At the end of the discussion each observer sits down with the person he or she was watching and gives feedback on his or her participation and reactions in the group. During the feedback session the person receiving the feedback is not allowed to comment until the observer finishes. After the feedback is completed discussion can ensue. Repeat the whole process reversing the inner and outer circles and make sure each person in the observer circle is assigned a different person to watch than the one who observed her or him. On completion of both phases hold a general discussion comparing and contrasting the individual and group processes.

E. Consensus. The consensus exercise entitled "Agree-Disagree," described in Figure 2.4 is another useful method of learning about group process. This exercise has a great deal of flexibility and can be utilized effectively in a variety of group situations that require group decision-making. The statements used for generating discussion can be varied to fit the situation, the nature of the group members, and the purpose for which the group was formed. After completing the exercise discuss the factors involved in reaching consensus as the group became larger.

F. Starting a Group From Scratch. This activity is particularly effective if utilized at the very inception of a class or group experience since it reduces social stimuli to a minimum and accentuates the dynamics that individuals experience as they encounter the task of becoming part of a group process. The following sequence of steps are suggested:

1. Blindfold each group member as they arrive and lead them to a a seat in a circle of chairs that have been set up beforehand.

2. When all members are blindfolded and seated, explain that the group has begun and that the first part of the experience will be non-verbal. Have group members stand and begin to mill around within the perimeter of the chairs (as the leader you can direct people back into

AGREE-DISAGREE ACTIVITY

Directions

1. Read each statement individually and decide whether you agree or disagree with it.
2. Select another person, and the two of you come to agreement on each of the statements. Words may be changed or added in order to come to an agreement. If you don't agree with the statement as it stands, you must come up with a revision that each person agrees with at each level.
3. After each statement has been discussed and agreement reached, select two other people who have reached agreement. The four of you now go through the process of reaching agreement on each of the statements.
4. After the four of you have reached agreement, select another group of four and the eight of you try to come to an agreement.

Sample Statements

1. Sex education is the responsibility of the family, and schools should not become involved.
2. Learning-disabled children are basically mean kids who don't listen and are lazy.
3. Students should not be allowed to have a voice in school administration or curriculum matters
4. Black people have less ability than Whites and should be treated accordingly.
5. No prison inmate or ex-convict should ever be trusted.
6. Law and order is the cure for our social problems today.
7. Radical students are really knowingly or unknowingly the spokespersons for world communism.
8. Individual freedom should be guaranteed at all costs.

Figure 2.4. Agree-disagree activity.

the group arena if they wander out). While milling, they are to make physical contact with other members making an effort to greet each person with whom they come in contact (this is to be done completely without talking).

3. Each group member is to make contact with at least five different people during the milling. When a member makes contact with the sixth person, they are to non-verbally signal that person that they want them to be their partner. If that person has made contact with five other people already they signal agreement. If they have not connected with five other people, they must refuse the invitation (non-verbally) and both continue to mill.

4. When all group members have found a partner, the leader assists each dyad to find seats for the next phase which is getting acquainted (both are still blindfolded). Have partners get to know each other in two ways. Using the question "Who Are You?" partners alternate asking the question repeatedly with the requirement that each answer be different. **Restriction:** Neither partner may give his or her name as an answer. Allow 3-5 minutes for the "Who Are You?" repetitions and then have each partner sculpt their partner's head with their hands to get a sense of their features.

5. When the sculpting is completed, the leader separates the partners forming two lines of chairs which are back to back so that partners will have restricted visual access to each other when blindfolds are removed.

6. Give each member an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper and a magic marker. Remove the blindfolds and have each person create a "wanted" poster by drawing a picture or caricature of their partner's head or face on the top one-half of the sheet and describing them with identifying data on the bottom one-half.

7. When "wanted" posters are complete, use masking tape to post them on a wall for all to see. Give each member another sheet of paper and have the sheets numbered

from 1 through X (number of people in the group). Number the posters I through X and have group members independently match posters with people, writing down the correct name next to the appropriate number on their sheet.

8. When most or all have been identified, review the posters as a group and place the member's names on each poster.

9. Process the activity in light of individual member's feelings and experience and in terms of group process dynamics.

II. Defining Group Counseling/Therapy

A Cognitive Exercise. Have each class member write his or her own definition of counseling or therapy. Encourage members to use their own words and to focus on aspects particularly meaningful to them. The definition need not be comprehensive, but it should reflect the unique perception of each class member. Discuss the definitions in class, noting on the chalkboard the different characteristics pointed out by class members. Then have the class members write their own definition of group counseling or group-therapy following the same guidelines of using their own words and focusing on aspects each person deems important. Discuss the group-counseling/group therapy definitions in the same manner as before, and then compare the two in an effort to identify similarities between them and differences that can be attributed to the special qualities of the group process.

III. Group Dynamics

The following activities can be used to illustrate some of the various characteristics unique to the group process described in this chapter. Many similar activities can be found in the books listed in the reference section at the end of the book (Bates, Johnson, & Blake, 1982; Corey et al., 1982; Hamachek, 1971; Johnson, 1972; Johnson & Johnson, 1982; Katz, 1973; Moustakas, 1972; Pfeiffer & Jones, 1969-79; Schutz, 1967; Stevens, 1971). The examples included here were selected because they involve a physical dimension demonstrating a psychological concept. Using techniques of this nature can help facilitate clearer understanding of group dynamics while at the same time adding diversity and variety to the group process.

A. Breaking Out. Place one member in the center of the group and have other members form a tight ring around him or her. The person in the center is instructed to try to get out of the group in any way possible, and the group is instructed to prevent such an escape. The leader should keep close control over the action to prevent excesses that might cause physical harm, and members should be cautioned not to exert themselves if they have some physical problem that might be aggravated. This exercise should seek its own level of time and participation.

Follow-up discussion should center around the members' experience and the implications of the exercise relative to group-process characteristics and the power of the group. Emotions elicited and strategies used to escape from or conform to group pressure in the exercise tend to reflect the actual feelings and reactions of members regarding group pressure toward conformity, identity, and loss of individual uniqueness. (This exercise may also be useful in group counseling when individual members are dealing with problems of dependency or lack of individual initiative.)

B. Breaking In. This exercise is the converse of the previous one. One member is placed outside the group, and the other group members form a tight unit that the outsider is instructed to try to get into. The same precautions relative to control of excesses and limiting participation in case of physical defects should be adhered to. This exercise has relevance for demonstrating the group's capacity for cohesiveness and members' need for belongingness that the group can meet. It also demonstrates the power of the group in preventing members from joining. The appeal of group membership must be grappled with by the outsider and involves making decisions as to the amount of personal effort that will be exerted to get into the group. Time involved and participation again are dependent on the situation.

Discussion should relate to members' experience and eventually move into the domain of relating the exercise to the power of the group and its dynamics. In group counseling this exercise is sometimes used to help members who feel isolated or lack commitment to the group to understand their feelings and behavior more clearly.

C. Behind-the-Back Technique. This technique developed by Corsini (1968) demonstrates the raw power of the group process when used in the manner described by its creator. Corsini developed the method in his work with prison inmates and used the negative feedback of the group to devastate the personality attributes of individual members that were creating problems for them. A greatly watered-down version can be useful in group counseling. One member of the group is asked to sit with his or her back to the group. He or she is instructed to listen and at no point is allowed to respond or react until the feedback is completed. The rest of the group proceeds to discuss their perceptions and feelings about the person relating both negative and positive reactions. It is necessary to let this proceed for an extended period of time for its full effect to be realized.

On completion of the feedback the member turns into the group and shares the feelings experienced during the feedback session. He or she should be encouraged to comment on the accuracy of the group's reaction from a personal point of view, and group discussion should attempt to clarify misunderstandings and mediate possible differences of opinion. The feelings experienced by members usually reflect the helplessness people often feel in the fact of group pressure and the fear that the group will respond negatively. Follow-up discussion should make members aware of using feedback and the group's power in a constructive manner.

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CHAPTER 3

RATIONALE FOR GROUP COUNSELING

THE NEED FOR A PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Group counseling has relevance and meaning only if it is understood and applied in the psychological context of human growth and development. A psychological framework is needed to guide the process, evaluate its impact, and provide a rationale for its use. However, while such a framework is a necessity, Jourard (1968) pointed out that to simply imitate someone else's theory or rationale is not sufficient. Each helping person must develop his or her own theoretical viewpoint to be truly effective in helping others. The development of a personal approach is necessary for a counselor to make the best use of the resources available in providing therapeutic help to other people. Major resources include the counselor's personality, knowledge, and training. These resources combined with each helping experience enable the counselor's theoretical approach to come to fruition.

The general impact of training and practice on the development of one's own approach to group counseling is illustrated in Figure 3.1. In training, the counselor is given an overview of the group process, which encompasses a variety of theories. Each of these theories utilizes certain techniques that can be learned and applied in the group setting. Once a counselor has an understanding of the process and at least a partial commitment to a theory that is congruent with individual personality, and once that counselor has learned techniques relevant to that theory, then he or she is ready to apply that learning in a supervised setting.

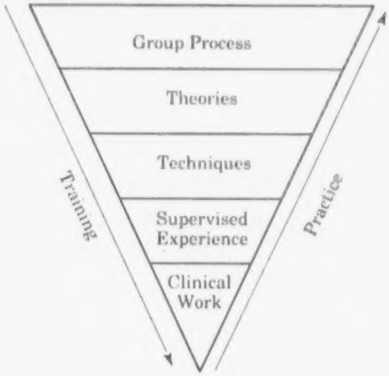

Figure 3.1. A model relating training and practice.

Practice operates in the opposite direction of training, helping counselors develop their own rationales and approaches to group counseling. From the very first experience as group leaders, counselors begin to evaluate their knowledge and skills relative to the group process. They develop, revise, and delete methods and techniques to improve effectiveness. They weigh the theoretical concepts they've learned, affirming some and refuting others, reorganizing refining or rejuvenating still others, and discovering new ones to fit the reality of their experiences in group counseling. At this point is when each counselor develops a personal conceptualization of the total group process. Thus individual personality, training, and experience have become interwined in a dynamic relationship that will continue to develop throughout a professional career.

Keep this conception of the relationship between training and practice in mind while I present the psychological framework of group counseling that will be used in this book. Remember that my rationale is the result of the interacting forces of my training, group-membership, leadership experience, and teaching. All of these have provided input for my understanding of the group process and influence how I teach that process to prospective group leaders.

The basic supposition of my rationale is that each person has certain human needs that are met primarily through social interaction with other human beings. The extent to which our needs are met is dependent on the type and quality of interpersonal relationships we have with others. The manner in which we meet our needs supplies the foundation of our lifestyles, and the relationships we develop form the bulwark of our identity. Our needs are the motivators of our behavior and are hierarchical in nature. Our environment and heredity provide us with opportunities we can utilize in meeting our needs (Jourard, 1968), but we basically depend on our interpersonal relationships to determine how. The ordering of our needs reflects the developmental process of the group within which the relationships formed provide the means to resolve problems that are curtailing effective adjustment and self-fulfillment.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Maslow (1943, 1954, and 1962) developed the hierarchical conceptualization of human needs that is used as the basis for our discussion. In Figure 3.2 is presented an adapted and embellished version of Maslow's original hierarchy. Maslow contended that people have certain basic needs that serve to motivate them to behave in a manner to satisfy those needs. Our needs are differentiated and have prepotent qualities that influence which need is going to be called into play as predominant and which need will emerge upon satisfaction of a prior need. Maslow postulated five basic needs including (in order of priority): physical needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. He stressed, however, that the individual should be viewed as a total person and that any motivated behavior can satisfy many needs at the same time. His main thrust was that man is dominated by wants and not by satisfactions because once a need is satisfied or even partially satisfied, other needs emerge that must be dealt with. Carroll (1969) noted that this situation usually results in man being "partially unsatisfied in all his needs," which he called "a normal state of affairs to which a person learns to adjust" (p.27). In addition, Laird and Laird (1967) in discussing the relationship among our different needs observed that under stress the higher-order needs (called "wants" in their terminology) tend to "peel off." This creates a situation where individuals are forced to operate on a less sophisticated level until they can once again proceed up the hierarchy.

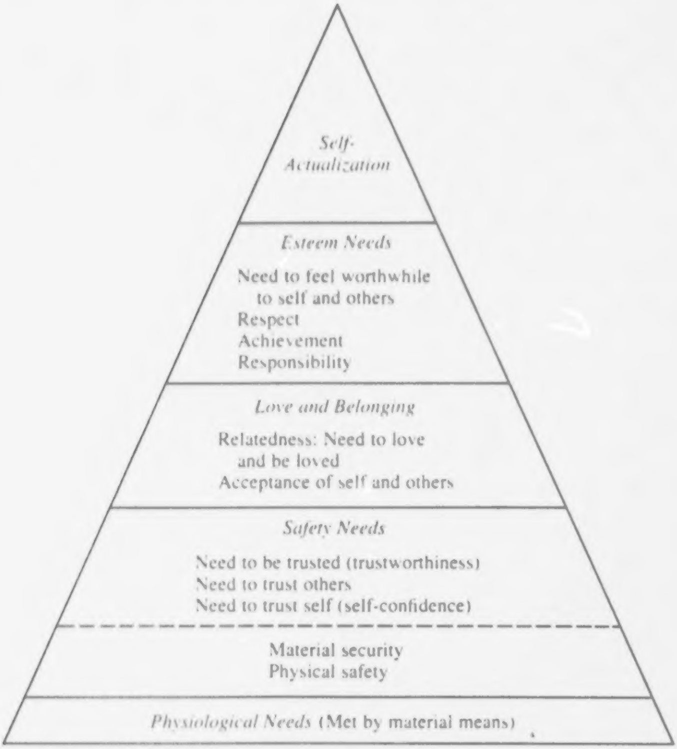
Self-Actualization
Esteem Needs
Need to feel worthwhile to self and others
Respect
Achievement
Responsibility
Love and Belonging
Relatedness: Need to love and be loved
Acceptance of self and others
Safety Needs
Need to be trusted (trustworthiness)
Need to trust others
Need to trust self (self-confidence)
Material security
Physical safety
Physiological Needs (Met by material means)

Figure 3.2. Hierarchy of Human Needs. (Data for diagram based on Hierarchy of Needs in "A Theory of Human Motivation" in *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd Edition, by Abraham H. Maslow. Copyright 1970 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. Used by permission.)

Besides the priority aspect of our needs. Maslow noted an important distinction between our lowest-order physiological needs (food, clothing, and so on) and the progressively higher order needs of safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Physiological needs are meant to be gratified and not deprived so that the higher-order needs and their goal-directed behaviors can emerge. These higher-order needs are social needs, and an individual's drive to satisfy them is much more critical in human motivation than is physical-need gratification. This is particularly true in our society, where for all practical purposes most people have access to the means of satisfying their physiological needs.

The needs hierarchy and the physical-social need distinction have direct application to counseling. If our clients are experiencing deprivation in any of these areas, that area most likely will be the focus of the counseling process. An overall goal of group counseling is to help clients meet their lower-order needs in a consistent manner, which will enable them to progress toward self-actualization. In addition, the social nature of the higher-order needs suggests that the group-counseling process is a plausible means of helping clients meet these needs. Let's turn our attention then to a specific discussion of each of these needs and consider their implications for group counseling.

Physiological Needs

All of us have experienced being too tired, too cold, or too thirsty to think about or do anything other than alleviating that sensation. Deprivation of our physical needs alters our perceptions drastically and effectively distorts our view of human nature and life (Maslow, 1943). Tolerance levels naturally vary and can be substantially altered in some cases, but ultimately failure to meet these needs is self-destructive. Our most basic drive, self-preservation, usually takes the form of making sure we have sufficient food, clothing, and shelter to sustain life. However, even in a society with an adequate level of material wealth, often cases of deprivation interfere with learning and the process of self-development. Students in a classroom who have not had sufficient rest the night before are difficult to motivate. People who have missed breakfast often find it difficult to concentrate on their jobs. Teachers who must participate in inservice meetings at the end of a teaching day may lack alertness due to fatigue. Group members who should be interacting may be distracted by such physical discomforts as a chilly room or uncomfortable seating. In any case physiological needs can raise havoc with our concentration, making it difficult to utilize our abilities to their fullest potential.

Physiological need fulfillment is a prerequisite for everything, including group counseling. The group process specifically and human relationships generally can't directly reduce that need. An effective group process depends on having members at a point where they are ready to work on meeting their higher-order needs. Physiological deprivation of members may pose insurmountable barriers to the group process. A group leader should be aware of this possibility, both in the obvious sense (members dozing or inattentive) and in the subtle sense (pride may prevent acknowledgement of lack of food). This second case is sometimes manifested in hostile or antagonistic behavior on the part of the member who for fear of losing esteem in the group's eyes will not admit to the lack of physiological requirements. For example, a 12-year-old inner-city youth from an economically deprived family consistently acted out during mid-morning group sessions at a child-guidance center. When the group leader, in consultation with a social worker, discovered that the boy seldom ate breakfast she instituted a snack at the beginning of each group session, which substantially reduced the boy's disruptive behavior. Leaders therefore must try to identify physiological needs when they account for unusual member actions and suggest activities and make arrangements that will alleviate those needs if members can't do so on their own.

In contrast, however, group leaders also must be alert to group members using physiological need ploys to resist involvement in or obstruct the group process. In my work with inmates in a prison setting one of their biggest complaints was that the physical environment was conducive to group therapy and the therapeutic process. Another group of educators at a weekend in-service program conducted in a motel setting raised such a fuss about the physical conditions that we spent the first day in search of an "appropriate" setting moving from auditorium to secluded lobby to a motel room to a member's home who lived nearby and finally in frustration disbanded to a lounge. The second day we reconvened in the original location with the group rule of "no moves" and the group finally formed and started to work.

Safety Needs

The desire for safety is basic to every human being. Our greatest frustrations are most often associated with our fear of the unknown, in social as well as physical situations. When we lack knowledge or commitments on which we can depend we lose touch with our sense of confidence, which gives rise to anxiety and the urge to protect ourselves.

The need for safety is related to the essential nature of trust, which is the ability to and experience of depending on something or someone as the stabilizing force in our lives. Franz Kafka acknowledged the importance of this need when he wrote that "man cannot live without a lasting trust in something indestructible within him, but both his trust and its indestructible object can remain forever concealed from him." Maslow (1943) has indicated that the safety need is the driving force behind our preference for routine, our withdrawal from the unfamiliar, and our mobilization of resources in times of emergency. Adler (Carroll, 1969) was even more emphatic, calling security man's basic drive and adding that "it is the feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, insecurity, which determines the goal of an individual's existence" (p. 25). The emphasis given this need for security places it near the very core of human existence and demands our active attention to satisfy it.

In Figure 3.2 are indications that safety needs are manifested in five specific ways. The desire for physical safety is foremost, although individuals often risk endangering their bodies to achieve certain valued objectives. Individuals may choose to endanger their physical well-being in exchange for thrills or a sense of accomplishment when they engage in certain forms of recreation or sports such as mountain climbing or car racing. Or, they may choose occupations that have high physical risk integrated into the performance of their job. Generally, however, people are cautious and concerned about protecting themselves from physical harm.

The guarantee of physical safety to group members while in group counseling is a standard requirement. Ethical prinicples of group practice dictate that groups not be in a setting where clients feel physically endangered, nor should members be forced to risk physical harm doing group activities. The group has no control over outside dangers other than to help members develop precautionary guidelines if they are concerned about situations in which they may experience physical harm. However, the group leader has an ethical responsibility of invoking interventive action if a "clear and present danger" situation in a group member's life surfaces in the course of group interaction.

The need for material security is also a concern of most people, especially where value systems and life-styles are based on material acquisition and monetary self-sufficiency. The terminology of economics and the banking industry clearly reflect this need, with words such as "trust fund," "securities," and "low-risk investments." This need becomes increasingly important as one grows older. Retirement benefits are always a key concern in labor negotiations and in occupational choices. Some people spend their entire work lives preparing for a retirement in which they will be financially solvent.

The material aspect of the safety need can be met by the process of attaining financial security in the form of insurance policies, retirement programs, bank accounts, debt-free possessions, investments, and the like. But group counseling has little direct relationship to meeting it. The group can help individuals develop and understand their values with respect to material acqusitions. It can also help members develop self-knowledge relative to educational and vocational planning, which contribute to meeting the need for material security. Some groups for the elderly are formed for the specific purpose of helping members deal with problems of physical and material security that often face them in their older years. Counseling groups for workers who are within a few years of retirement are becoming more popular in business and industry. However, groups of this nature often move from a materialistic emphasis to a consideration of the higher-order needs, which must be dealt with to develop a personally meaningful existence in old age.

The other three aspects of the safety need are person-oriented and relational in nature and are set apart from physical and material security by a broken line in Figure 3.2. We all have the need to trust ourselves, to trust others, and to be trusted by others. The need to trust ourselves, to have self-confidence, is perhaps the most elusive personal characteristic we attempt to establish. We strive to build a sense of personal security in an ever-increasing number of situations as we mature. We tend to become involved when we feel sure of ourselves, and we tend to avoid or resist becoming involved in situations in which we lack confidence. Even as experience positively affects our self-confidence, we need to continually reaffirm it. Most people experience frustration with regard to self-confidence, feeling they never have enough. Although some people may be accused of being overly self-confident, in most cases their behavior is an overreaction to their lack of self-confidence. Even people who appear to have a healthy self-assurance report they experience doubts and anxieties about their ability to trust themselves. Only as we meet this need can we experience any satisfaction in our growth and accomplishments, and only on the basis of self-confidence can we build a predictable stability to pave the way for personal fulfillment in social situations.

The need for self-confidence is typically associated with the problems of most members in a counseling group. Either lack of self-confidence or ostentatious self-assurance used to defend against one's fears is common. The group therefore must provide an atmosphere where threat to one's personal security is minimal and where members can develop the ability to trust themselves. This ability is particularly important at the point of implementing change. The group is only the testing ground, and it depends on the individual to determine whether change will materialize. Thus the amount of confidence individuals feel in themselves is directly related to the probability of successful change.

The needs to trust others and to be trusted by others are the foundation of our social relationships and are essential therapeutic elements in the group process. We can only meet these two needs through our personal contacts with others, and in most cases they have a reciprocal effect. The need to trust others is our desire to place ourselves or some aspect of ourselves in the confidence of another person. May (1953) had the idea that each person has a natural thrust beyond himself/herself toward others, and this is partly manifested in the need to trust others. Johnson (1981) has indicated that human beings have a "relationship imperative" which motivates them to reach out in confidence to others. However, a subtle but critical relational counterpart to that thrust in each of us is needed. An ancient Chinese proverb states that "a sure way to help a man is to let him help you." When we confide in (trust) another person we invoke self-confidence in that person and invite reciprocity. This precipitates bonding in the relationship while enhancing the security of the individual. Our need to trust propels us to overcome our aloneness and sets the stage for deeper emotional attachment to others. Our need to trust generates opportunities to rely on other people as resources in our growth and development and in problem-solving. Our need to trust is a motivating force in the group-counseling process that enables self-disclosure to occur and gives psychological credence to sharing.

The need to be trusted by others promotes the group process of identity formation and opens the door for constructive feedback in our relationships. Our need to be trustworthy is evident in our desire for relationships that result in increased self-respect and self-confidence. As others share themselves with us, we perceive ourselves as important and capable of caring and respect. The need to be trusted enables our social interaction to become a dynamic growth process, giving us both the capacity to depend on others and to be depended on by others. In the group process the need to be trusted encourages members to supply therapeutic help to their fellow members. It motivates them to demonstrate their trustworthiness by their care, concern, and resourcefulness, which is reflected in their feedback. This trustworthiness is a vital personality trait that forms the basis for positive interpersonal relationships. It acts as a lubricant reducing the social friction created by group dynamics and pressures and ameliorates the defensive posture of individuals that produces resistance to both the group process and individual change.

Love and Belonging

Several years ago I came across a quotation by John E. Largients, which expresses emphatically the nature of the need for love and belonging. He wrote, "Not many men may be willing to die for love these days. But you can't escape the fact that millions are dying daily for lack of it." Maslow (1943) pointed out that we all have a desire for affectionate relations with people and for a place in a group. The absence of these relationships with family, friends, or people in general results in loneliness and social isolation. Glasser (1965) affirmed the need for relatedness or the need to love and be loved is basic to man. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) stated that human beings have affection needs that are expressed in their need to belong and to help and be helped. Common agreement is that every human being experiences an essential necessity for love and that our need for love is not one-sided. To give love to others is equally important as to receive it from others. Stendhal summarized this quality of love when he said that "love is a well from which we can drink only as much as we put in."

Many levels of this need for love and belonging exist, ranging from simple acceptance to the complex intimacy of a love relationship in a marriage or family. Our need for love is initially exhibited in social situations by our desire for acceptance by individuals or groups that are attractive to us. When we experience acceptance by others, we experience fulfillment and a sense of belonging. This leads to an association with the person or group who accepted us, thus contributing to our identity. This experience of acceptance by others is a reflection of their own acceptance of themselves. We not only have a need to be accepted by others, but we also have a need to accept ourselves. The relationship between acceptance of self and the ability to accept others is pointed out in the Judeo-Christian commandment "love your neighbor as yourself." If we have little love for ourselves, then only little love can be shown to those around us. Wrenn (1971) related this idea to counselors when he wrote that the amount of caring counselors can show their clients can be measured by the amount of caring they show for themselves,

In group counseling the members usually are struggling with this need for acceptance in some way. They may be experiencing problems in their social relationships that make them feel isolated from and unaccepted by others. They may have negative feelings about their own selves, not liking who they are and therefore being unable to accept themselves. Their behavior may be such that they experience rejection from others, including their families. The group process therefore must take the need for love and belonging into account. An atmosphere must be created in the group where the members feel accepted and free to share their true selves with others, thus resulting in greater self-acceptance. If the need for acceptance is not met in the group, members will use their energies to defend themselves and resist the process. Whereas trust is the foundation of the group process, acceptance is the framework around which it is built. If members can feel accepted even though they have unresolved problems and difficulties, facing up to the task of change is less threatening.

Esteem

The need for esteem is unique because it possesses a quality that can drive people to make extreme sacrifices in its pursuit. We can find many examples of people who have severely taxed their minds and bodies, sacrificed values, and renounced friends and family to attain the fame, fortune, or status they feel will give them esteem. However, in such efforts the meaning of esteem is frequently lost or confused. Maslow's (1943) idea of esteem centers around seeking recognition from others and from oneself as a worthwhile person. This need is satisfied when one experiences feelings of worth, strength, usefulness, and confidence. Unfortunately the need for esteem has too often been associated with financial success, social position, role attainment, material acquisition and accomplishments. This has caused confusion leading to the simplistic notion that achievement equals esteem, which is inaccurate.

The need for esteem is very complex and involves an integration of the elements of worth, respect, achievement, and responsibility. Glasser (1965) stated that the second of man's two basic needs is the need for respect or the need to feel worthwhile to self and others. In this description we have the essence of esteem. It is a human feeling that can only be transmitted on an interpersonal basis. The meaning of esteem comes from within oneself or from others. It does not come with position or money, although these things can be used to command the attention that relates to esteem. Without the psychological reaction of self-respect or self-esteem generated by one's accomplishments, the accomplishment is personally meaningless. Without the respect communicated by other people, position or wealth fail to give us feelings of worth. In other words, the esteem need can only be met through our interaction with other human beings.

Another characteristic of the esteem that is overlooked at times is its relationship to responsibility. We can only experience feelings of worth to ourselves and others if we act in a responsible manner. The relationship between responsibility, achievement, and respect is circular. To achieve something we must take responsibility. Once we have taken responsibility and realized an accomplishment, respect is generated both from ourselves and from others. To maintain this respect, we must be responsible, and so on. The amount of responsibility we assume is directly related to what we accomplish and the amount of respect we experience.

Low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are common in group members. As individuals experience problems they can't resolve themselves, the natural tendency is to think less of themselves and to feel that others think less of them. This downward spiral must be broken by the group process. Within the group the client should realize feelings of worth. The climate should be characterized by a positive attitude that takes into account the strengths of individual members as well as their weaknesses. The group can meet client needs for esteem initially by focusing on individual assets. By allowing members to experience responsibility for themselves and by encouraging them to help one another, the group can facilitate the process of solving individual member problems while at the same time meet the need for respect.

Self-Actualization

To begin with we must distinguish between self-actualization and the need for self-actualization. The former is a state of being, and the latter is a motivating force that influences our actions. Although the tendency is to relate self-actualizaiton to an utopian life-style devoid of problems and full of peace, fulfillment, and satisfaction, a more realistic perspective is to view it as a state in which all of one's energy can be mobilized to achieve one's potential. This definition has potent import, because one goal of the group process is to help individuals utilize all their resources in resolving their problems.

Many descriptions of a self-actualized person can be given, all of which reveal the positive quality of the state. Gilmer (1970) described self-actualized people as "fully functioning"; they think well of themselves and others and view relationships with others as important investments and as opportunities for developing their own selves. The self-actualized person according to Johnson (1972) is "time competent, that is (one) having the ability to tie the past and the future to the present in a meaningful continuity while fully living in the present" (p. 2). Hesse (1971) captures this conception of self-actualization in his discourse on the river. The following excerpts are examples.

> Today he saw one of the river's secrets, one that gripped his soul. He saw that the water continually flowed and flowed and yet it was always there; it was always the same and yet every moment it was new. (p. 102)

> The river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere and . . . . The present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, nor the shadow of the future. (p. 107)

Finally, Carroll (1969) summarized the characteristics of self-actualized persons in practical and specific terms. They are spontaneous and feel free to be themselves because they have confidence in and acceptance of themselves. They are self-sufficient but have feelings for mankind. They have a strong desire to help others, have a good social conscience, are creative, natural, and flexible. They are problem-centered rather than self-centered and are able to tolerate ambiguity.

Although to describe a self-actualized person is relatively easy, to be one is much more difficult. The experience of being self-actualized is difficult to identify because when one is in that state it is not necessary to think about being self-actualized. In fact, one of the cues that a person is no longer self-actualized or has not yet become so is when he or she is concerned about being self-actualized. Self-actualization is therefore a transient state for most people that is moved into and out of with the flow of life experiences and relationships with others. One is aware of it as a goal to be strived for or an identifiable condition that has passed. The more relevant consideration then is the drive to become self-actualized, which has implications for the group-counseling process.

Maslow (1954) ascribed the need for self-actualization to "man's desire for self-fulfillment; namely to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially" (pp.91-92). Combs and Snygg (1959) called self-actualization humanity's basic need and describe it as "that great, driving, striving force in each of us by which we are continually seeking to make ourselves more adequate to cope with life" (p.46). The desire to realize our potential is the motivating force that drives all of us to attempt to remove obstacles from our lives and is the therapeutic generator of efforts made by group-counseling members to resolve their problems. Even though we can never completely fulfill our potential the striving to do so is the self-actualization process. The concept of self-actualization is not a static state that, once attained, can be maintained indefinitely. Rather it embodies a continual growth process, which is characterized by momentary peak experiences and plateaus of satisfactory fulfillment but which pushes us toward continual self-development throughout our lives.

Bach (1970) presented this perspective of the continuous self-actualizing process in his book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull: A Story*. The excerpt that follows points out the unceasing nature of the drive toward fulfillment of one's potential (Jonathan Livingston Seagull is speaking to his protege' Fletcher Seagull as he is about to send him out into the world on his own):

> You don't need me any longer. You need to keep finding yourself, a little more each day, that real unlimited Fletcher Seagull. He's your instructor. You need to understand him and to practice him.(p.92)

The impact of the need for self-actualization in group counseling has several dimensions. As group members' needs for safety, love, and esteem are met, they have access to those resources of energy that had previously been used to meet those needs. The need to actualize oneself emerges as the important motivator in clients' lives through which they not only gain a greater awareness of their potential but also find ways of using it to improve their lives. "Growth groups" are formed for the express purpose of helping members expand their awareness and utilize their potential more fully. These groups use encounter or T-group methods and are designed to help adequately functioning people become even more effective. In counseling groups, however, as lower-order needs are met in the group, clients can focus attention more intensively on their problems and a work-oriented atmosphere develops. Group members can attack their difficulties in a pragmatic manner without the emotional overtones usually associated with confronting personal problems. In accord with the idea that self-actualized people are not devoid of problems, the group members not only learn how to solve specific problems but learn general problem-solving skills that will be useful to them in the future.

NEEDS AND RELATIONSHIPS: FORMATION OF THE SELF

VIEWING MAN IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

The question "What is man?" always leads to an answer that construes man in some social context. Whether given extensive or minimal credit, the interpersonal environment must always be accounted for. William James' (1890) observation that "no more fiendish punishment could be devised, were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof" (p.293) underscores the crucial relevance of our interpersonal network—without it we simply would not be. Johnson (1981) pointed out that human beings "desire and seek out relationships with others", and "have personal needs that can be satisfied only through interacting with other humans" (p.1).

Interpersonal relationships are extremely important in meeting our basic human needs. Relationships with others are required to adequately satisfy our needs for safety, love, and esteem. Having positive relationships with others is a key quality of a self-actualized person. Because of this basic dependence on human relationships, people are primarily social in nature. Interpersonal contacts not only meet our needs but also develop the qualities that make us uniquely human. Therefore we need to look intensely at interpersonal relationships to determine their impact on the human growth process and their relevance to group counseling.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1971) stated that "human beings develop in a sequential and systematic manner, not because of the gradual unfolding of instinctual tendencies, but because they experience a regular sequence of interpersonal interactions in their lives" (pp.11-12). Gazda (1971) added that "it is primarily through people that we grow into what we are today, and it is primarily through our relationships that we grow into what we will be tomorrow" (p.1). The importance of the group process stems from the fact that we are social beings who develop through adequate and meaningful exposure to social situations and relationships. Clearly we can neither meet our needs nor develop our humanness in isolation. We must have contact with others, and these contacts must qualify as relationships for their influence to be realized.

Our relationships have a socializing effect on our lives, shaping our behavior to conform to the standards of society, but they also have a differentiating impact that enables each person to develop a unique personality, self-concept, and identity. Johnson (1981) stated that "our identity is built out of our relationships with other people. As we interact with others we note their responses to us, and we learn to view ourselves as they view us" (p.2). In fact he went so far as to state that our "psychological health depends almost entirely on our relationships with other people. The ability to build and maintain cooperative, interdependent relationships with other people is often cited as a primary manifestation of psychological health" (p.3).

Combs and Snygg (1959) stipulated that our self is basically a social product that arises out of our experience with other human beings. Self-image and the self-system acquired through social contact are built on experiences of approval or disapproval, called "reflected appraisals" by Sullivan (1953a). In other words, the essence of a person's identity depends on social interactions, which help the person differentiate himself or herself from the environment and from others, to be a person in his or her own right (Allport, 1960).

Our interpersonal relationships form the learning environment in which we acquire self-knowledge. "We learn about ourselves not only by experiencing our own actions, but also by experiencing the action of others, who serve as both mirrors and models for imitation" (Carroll, 1969, p.270). Sullivan (1953b) contended that personality is almost entirely the product of interaction with other significant human beings. Who we are is forged in the cauldron of our human relationships. Even Carl Rogers' (1951) self theory acknowledges the impact of interpersonal relationships. One of his 19 propositions states: "As a result of interaction with the environment and *particularly, as a result of interactions with others*, one's picture of oneself is formed" (Italics added) (p. 483). The importance of this self-knowledge was underscored by Kubie (1958) as the key to effective maturation and development: "Without self-knowledge in depth. . .we can have no adults, but only aging children who are armed with words and paint and clay and atomic weapons, none of which they understand" [p. 133].

The group is one of the primary vehicles that provides us with self-knowledge. Family, peer group, school group, occupational group, religious affiliation or church fellowship, and social set supply us with the interaction whereby we learn about ourselves. Mahler (1969) effectively tied this influence of groups to the group-counseling process when he stated,

> A major goal of group counseling is to develop a relationship which will enable the counselor to meet the important developmental needs of [clients] and to help them with the identity-seeking process.
>
> Group counseling provides an opportunity for [clients] to examine in a friendly and permissive atmosphere their feelings and attitudes and the ideas they have about themselves and the world. [p. 14]

Group counseling also has merit for another reason. Although our relationships are the key to meeting our needs and developing our personality, they also are the core of most of the problems we experience. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) said that "all human problems are primarily social" (p.9). Gazda (1971) said that "Many of our real problems in living are interpersonal in nature. Therefore it seems reasonable to help [clients] develop skills necessary for establishing and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships. . .we must help [clients] become socially competent" (pp. 6-7). Mahler (1969) added that "the major concerns people bring to group counseling focus around the basic socialization process" (p.11). The social milieu of the counseling group is conducive to helping members deal effectively with their concerns, because it stresses effective relationship development as a means of learning about oneself and finding socially relevant solutions to personal problems.

THE JOHARI WINDOW

Since relationships are the key to meeting many basic needs and are also the means by which we develop identity and self-concept, the nature of our relationships takes on strategic value in our growth and development. To understand how relationships develop and how positive ones differ from a negative ones is imperative. This understanding is necessary from a psychological standpoint and a group counseling frame of reference. In this regard Luft and Ingham (Luft, 1984) designed a relationship development model called the Johari Window to explain the process of relationship development. Figure 3.3 presents an adapted form of their basic model.

Relationships develop as a result of interaction between people in which information is exchanged. The extent to which a relationship develops depends on the intensity of the interaction involved and the nature and depth of the information shared.

In any relationship, two person components—self and others—and two information components—known and unknown—exist. Juxtaposed to one another a grid of four quadrants is created which can be used to graphically illustrate the nature of all relationships from initial contact or acquaintances to our most deeply intimate associations. By manipulating the size of the various quadrants we can graphically illustrate the nature of all relationships from superficial (small open area) to deeply intimate (large open area). No intrinsic value orientation is in the model inferring that all our relationships should be characterized by a certain degree of openness. Rather the model is a tool for studying relationships, and it provides a basis for assessing their growth. Most of our relationships run the openness gamut, however, no human relationship can be characterized as being completely open.

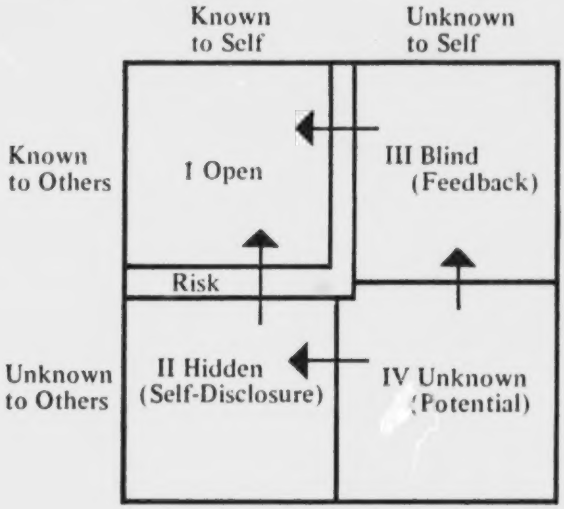
Known to Self
Unknown to Self
Known to Others
Unknown to Others
I Open
III Blind (Feedback)
Risk
II Hidden (Self-Disclosure)
IV Unknown (Potential)

Figure 3.3. Johari Window. From *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics* by Joseph Luft. Reprinted by permission of Mayfield Publishing Company, copyright 1984, 1970, and 1963 by Joseph Luft.

Quadrant I is called the *open* area and represents all information that is mutually accessible to all participants in the relationship. This information may range from the mere exchange of names with a first time acquaintance to a deep sharing of our innermost thoughts and feelings with an intimate partner. As relationships develop and grow, the open area expands. Note that we have relationships of all degrees of openness, and that the open quadrant increases in size as a result of interactions where information drawn from the other quadrants of the grid is exchanged in the relationship.

Quadrant II is the *hidden* area and represents information known to the self but not shared with others. This quadrant encompasses all our self-knowledge accrued through personal experience and learning. This area is the domain which houses the "real you". Only when you want others "to know" does information pass into the open quadrant through a process known as self-disclosure. The important characteristic of this area is that you control the nature and amount of information which is disclosed. You usually make the decision as to what and when based on the level of trust and acceptance sensed in the relationship. Any time you choose to self disclose you take a risk because now others have access to the information and as such you lose control of it. John Powell (1969) in his book *Why am I Afraid to Tell you Who I Am* discussed at length many of the barriers that hinder us in telling others about ourselves. However, the more we do disclose, the greater the likelihood that others will know us as we really are.

Quadrant III is a *blind* area. This area contains information, i.e., knowledge and perceptions, others know about us but have not shared with us. Each of us develops impressions of those to whom we relate. However, until we tell them what our perceptions are, that information remains part of the blind area in the relationship. The only way to remove this barrier in a relationship is through the communication mechanism of giving feedback. However, feedback involves risk just as self-disclosure does. Therefore, we usually hold back giving feedback until we are sure that the relationship will not be jeopardized or until we feel the relationship will improve because of it.

Quadrant IV is called the *unknown* area and represents the potential for growth that is a part of all relationships. Information from this quadrant materializes as a relationship progresses through its various stages of development. For example, we all have the capacity to love. However, until we become involved in a relationship where we experience loving and being loved, that information is an unknown entity.

Similarly, as we relate to others over time, aspects of ourselves emerge that neither we nor our partners knew existed. Information seldom moves directly from the unknown to the open; it usually follows a route through either the hidden or blind quadrants into the open area.

The factor governing the amount of self-disclosure and feedback that occurs in relationships is risk. As human beings, we are endowed with self-protective defense mechanisms which intercede whenever we sense we are vulnerable to reprisal or rejection. Consequently, we do not unleash overly personal, positive, or negative information unless we are somewhat assured that we will not be punished or hurt or that the relationship will be able to stand it.

Very little risk occurs in disclosing something about yourself that is already obvious or in giving feedback that a person is familiar with already. However, as the material shared becomes more personal in nature, the element of risk increases. Risk is taking the chance that others will reject us or that we will experience some form of reprisal as a result of what we share. For this reason we tend to guard against letting others know us or sharing our perceptions of others until we are reasonably sure that such action will be received in a non-threatening manner or will accomplish a desired result. However, a certain degree of risk-taking must occur for any relationship to grow. Benjamin Franklin's old adage, "nothing ventured, nothing gained," is applicable to the arena of relationships. Generally speaking, when we risk self-disclosure or feedback and experience positive results, we become more willing to do so again. Thus a positive growth cycle is initiated in the relationship. On the other hand, if we experience negative consequences, we are less likely to risk again which inevitably results in relational stagnation, deterioration, or termination.

In everyday relationships and in group counseling, risk is reduced when trust, acceptance, respect, communication, and understanding characterize our interpersonal contacts. Self-disclosure and feedback can then operate freely, generating more opportunities for personal learning and growth. In addition, a reciprocal effect occurs: As conditions suitable for personal sharing improve the quantity and quality of self-disclosure and feedback increase, and as more self-disclosing and feedback occur, the conditions for doing so improve. In group counseling then, the leader must help develop a climate where members can take risks, thereby enabling the mechanisms of self-disclosure and feedback to function in a constructive manner.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Figure 3.4 illustrates the development of personality, identity, and self-concept based on the interaction between basic human needs and relationships with others. Personality is the behavioral dimension of our self which develops over time and is manifested in the manner in which we relate to the world around us. It includes our traits, habits, and basic tendencies that characterize us over time and across circumstances. Identity is the cognitive component of our self encompassing all information that we perceive to pertain directly and indirectly to answering the question "Who are you?" for ourselves. Self concept is the affective element of the self containing our subjective evaluative conclusions of how we feel about our self at any point in time. Our self esteem may be positive or negative, high or low depending on circumstances and situations. But the composite of all evaluations in both a contemporary and longitudinal sense forms our self concept.

Glasser (1965) pointed out that our needs can only be met through involvement with other human beings. Relationships with others help us develop our individual uniqueness and adapt to societal standards. White (1966) indicated that one primary growth trend is that of developing better interpersonal relationships to improve our lives. In this case our needs motivate us to form relationships that will help us achieve our potential and in that manner improve our lives. The overall result of this interactive process is the personhood of each human being. It must be noted that this illustration is an oversimplification of a very complex process, the dynamics of which affect the development of each person throughout life.

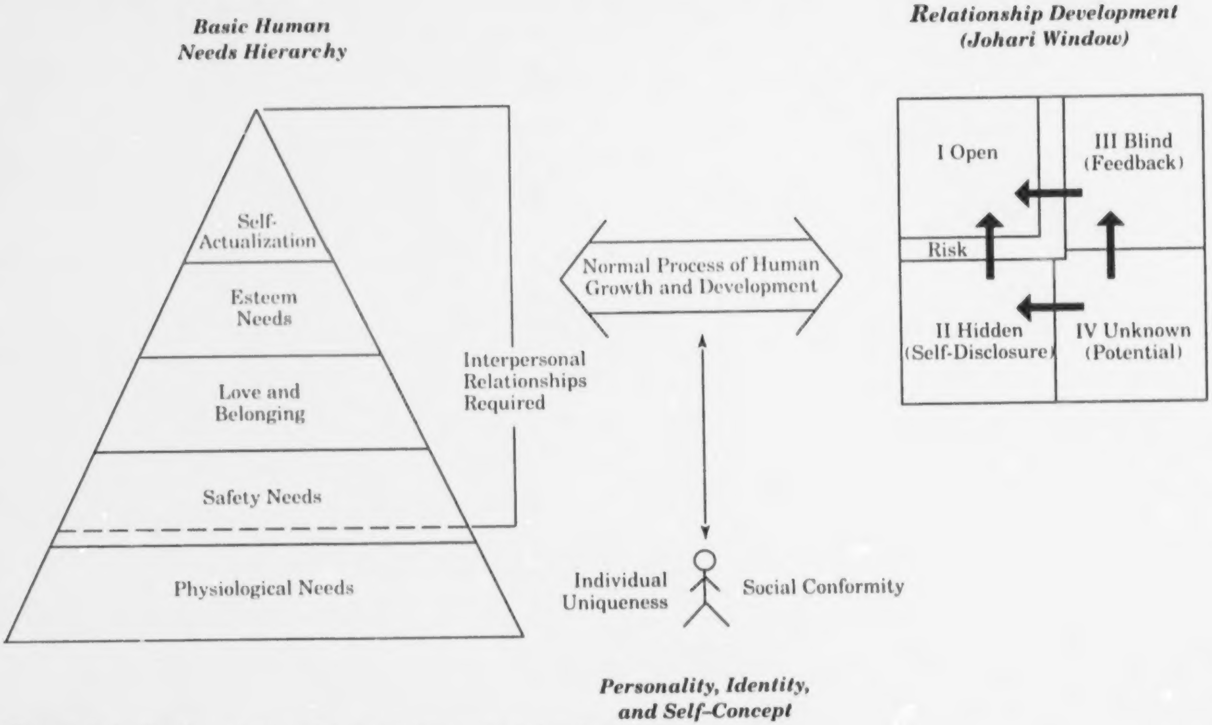
Basic Human Needs Hierarchy
Self-Actualization
Esteem Needs
Love and Belonging
Safety Needs
Physiological Needs
Interpersonal Relationships Required
Normal Process of Human Growth and Development
Individual Uniqueness
Social Conformity
Personality, Identity, and Self-Concept
Relationship Development (Johari Window)
I Open
III Blind (Feedback)
Risk
II Hidden (Self-Disclosure)
IV Unknown (Potential)

Figure 3.4. Needs, relationships, and personal development.

RELATING THE RATIONALE TO THE GROUP PROCESS

The representation in Figure 3.5 depicts the overall relationship between the psychological framework discussed in this chapter and the group-counseling process. The normal process of growth and development entails the interaction between our needs and our relationships resulting in the nature of our personal identity. However, within that process obstacles in the form of problems occur that impede our growth. These problems generally fall into two main categories: problems in meeting our needs and problems in social relationships. These categories are certainly not mutually exclusive but each has one basic distinguishing characertistic. Needs problems tend to be intrapersonal in nature, while social problems are interpersonal. In any case the problems have a symbiotic relationship to each other in the sense that problem resolution is contingent on the interaction of needs with relationships.

In some ways these two problem categories are reciprocal, i.e., unmet individual needs will contribute to relationship problems, and relationship problems present obstacles to getting personal needs met. In most instances an interpersonal component to all human problems must be addressed when presented in counseling (Trotzer, 1985). Yalom (1985) confirmed this view noting that in therapy goals often shift from relief of suffering (intrapersonal) to goals that have relational implications (interpersonal). Patients who come into therapy desiring release from anxiety or depression move to wanting to improve communications, develop relationships, or learn to trust others, love, or be honest in their relating. This interpersonal factor in and of itself commends group counseling/therapy as a more comprehensive therapeutic modality. Consequently, the group counseling process must account for the needs of the individuals and the social relationships required to meet those needs in order to create a climate conducive to helping clients remove difficulties from their lives.

The developmental sequence of the group-counseling process falls into a series of stages that reflect both the needs

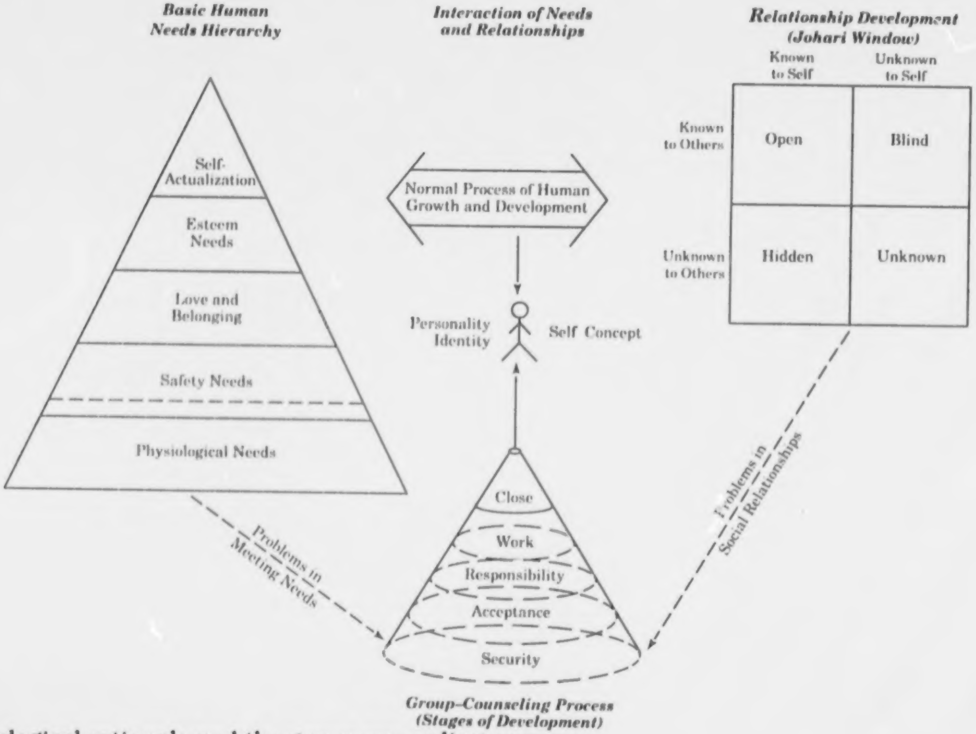
Basic Human Needs Hierarchy
Self-Actualization
Esteem Needs
Love and Belonging
Safety Needs
Physiological Needs
Interaction of Needs and Relationships
Normal Process of Human Growth and Development
Personality Identity
Self Concept
Relationship Development (Johari Window)
Known to Self
Unknown to Self
Known to Others
Unknown to Others
Open
Blind
Hidden
Unknown
Problems in Meeting Needs
Problems in Social Relationships
Close
Work
Responsibility
Acceptance
Security
Group-Counseling Process (Stages of Development)

Figure 3.5. The psychological rationale and the group counseling process.

hierarchy and the relational qualities amenable to self-disclosure and feedback. As indicated in Figure 3.5 the sequence includes the following stages in order of occurrence: security, acceptance, responsibility, work, and closing. The characteristics and dynamics of each of these stages and their corresponding developmental tasks will be discussed in the following chapters.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The learning activities selected for this chapter relate to the needs hierarchy, self-disclosure, and feedback. In most cases the exercises are very flexible in terms of purpose; therefore, follow-up discussion may result in widely varied reactions. Each exercise has relevance to the group-counseling process from both a teaching and a practicing perspective.

Needs and Groups: A Self Assessment Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the relationship between our needs and relationships with respect to identity development. It is useful as an assessment tool for the purpose of setting interpersonal and personal growth goals in group counseling. Each person completes the exercise individually as a prerequisite to group interaction. Instructions:

1. Make an exhaustive list of all the groups of which you are a member.

2. Identify those groups which meet the needs listed below and place them in the appropriate column.

SECURITY	LOVE AND BELONGING	ESTEEM

3. Using only your group memberships as material write a one paragraph description of your identity.

4. Identity Self-assessment

    a. List those groups that you value highly and which contribute positively to your identity.

    b. List those groups you think contribute negatively to your identity.

    c. List those groups with whom you would like to disassociate yourself.

    d. List groups with whom you would like to join or increase your participation.

    e. Based on your entries in b, c, and d, set goals for yourself to work toward.

Coming to Life Activities

Physiological needs, particularly those associated with fatigue, boredom, and tension can be effectively dealt with through the use of physical activities that stimulate physical and mental alertness and relieve tension and anxiety. The following are examples of activities that can be done individually, in dyads, or in groups. An excellent sequence to follow in a group situation is to select one activity from each category and build from individuals to dyads to groups. These activities are most useful as icebreakers at the start of the group sessions or when group members indicate a need for physical break from the psychological strain of group interaction (Kassera & Kassera, 1979).

A. Individual Activities

Deep Breathing. Disperse group members around the room. Have each group member take three deep breaths, increasing the volume of air intake with each successive breath. Have members follow your example so that everyone is doing the same thing. Then have members inhale and hold their breath for 30 seconds. At the end of 30 seconds, have them exhale forcefully making their own personal sound in unison with the group. Take several deep breaths to relax. Have them repeat the breath-holding sequence, this time for 45 seconds or one minute. At the end of this exercise members should experience rapid heartbeats. Relax with easy breathing and move on to the next activity.

Isometrics. Isometrics utilize the imagination as the means of generating physical exertion thereby stimulating physical alertness. Have group members stand with hands extended slightly above their heads. Tell them to imagine that a 2-ton elevator is descending on them and at your signal they must hold the elevator up to prevent being crushed. Signal the members to start, allowing them to exert themselves for 15 seconds. Repeat this process three times, allowing time for members to relax and catch their breath between each effort. Encourage members to put their whole bodies into the effort. Repeat this same sequence using the concept of two walls closing in a la a "Star Wars" trash compactor. The members must push against the walls by extending their hands out from their sides. On the third trial of each isometric sequence have group members succeed, i.e., actually put the elevator up or the walls out.

B. Dyad Activities

Mirroring. Pair group members off and have them face each other. Appoint one as the actor and one as the mirror. The objective is for the mirror to imitate all motions and actions of the actor. Have the actor begin slowly and gradually, quicken the pace to a point where it is impossible for the mirror to follow, and then gradually slow down again. Reverse roles and repeat the exercise. You also may want to switch partners several times or form an inner and outer circle of partners and then rotate one of the circles.

Hand Dancing. Have partners face each other and place their hands, palms extended, approximately 1 inch from each other. Have one partner begin to move his or her hands slowly. The other partner is to follow the actions of the first pair of hands maintaining the 1-inch distance and not touching.

Speed up the process to the point where following is impossible and then slow down. Reverse roles, and repeat the same process.

An alternative form of hand dancing that can be used to help group members focus on the nature of relationships and communication is a three step sequence using three different versions of hand dancing. First have members do the hand dancing activity as previously described but with hands about six inches apart. Second, have members clasp hands. Use the same leader-follower instructions but at some point add an instruction for the follower to resist following. Third, have partners touch hands (palms and fingers). Repeat leader-follower and resister instructions. Upon completion of the sequence, process the activity in light of members' experiences relating them to the nature and effectiveness of communication in relationships.

Back Breakers. Have partners stand back to back locking their arms at the elbow. Instruct them to cooperate in turning side to side and stretching each other's arm and shoulder muscles. Then have one partner bend over slowly pulling the other on to his or her back, holding the person there for a short time. Then reverse the process. Repeat the exercise both ways three or four times. This exercise should be done slowly and carefully so the participants can feel the stretching, but they shouldn't overdo either the lifting or the strain of being stretched.

An added task can be to have partners work together to sit down on the floor and get back to their feet while retaining their back to back, arms locked position.

C. Group Activities

Human Machine. Have one member of the group begin a motion of some kind. A second member attaches physically to the first, adding another motion but keeping in tune with the first. The rest of the members attach themselves one at a time until the whole group is functioning as a machine. Once the whole group is involved moderate the motion by directive, speeding up and slowing down. At least once accelerate to the point of disintegration to demonstrate the importance of group coordination and teamwork.

Circle Massage: Have group members stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Have them take a right face, form cupped hands, and begin to beat on the back of the person in front of them in a rapid staccato manner moving all around the person's back. Switch to a neck and shoulder massage after about 30 seconds. The circle will often begin to move around of its own volition. After a suitable time period have the group do an about-face and repeat the same process.

2-Foot Square: Mark off a square that's much smaller than could easily accommodate the number of people in the group (a 2-foot square for ten people). Instruct the group that their task is to get everyone in the group inside the square. If the group is outdoors a stone or a stump can be used for the same purpose. An interesting outgrowth of this activity is that it often points out the need for cooperation and cohesiveness to facilitate effective group interaction.

Group Hop: Form group into a circle standing shoulder to shoulder. Have the group make a right face placing their left hand on the left shoulder of the person in front of them and reaching down with the right hand to pick up the person's right ankle. When the group is steady, instruct them to hop forward and then backward. Make an about face and repeat the activity using right hands on shoulders and left hands holding ankles.

Dr. Untangle: Have group members (at least 6) stand in a circle. Have them raise arms over their heads. Instruct each member to clasp the hands of two different persons in the group who are not standing to their immediate right or left. Once all members are appropriately clasped, instruct them to untangle themselves without letting go of their hands. (Properly completed the result will be a full circle with members holding hands.)

The Knot: Another version of the untangling task is to have members stand in a line holding hands. As leader, grasp the hand of the person at one end of the line and proceed to weave, snakelike in and out of the line with members following your lead as best they can. When you have the group sufficiently tangled up, connect the person's hand you are holding to the free hand of the last person in the line. Instruct the group to untangle the knot without letting go of hands. The successful result will be a connected circle.

Coin on the Forehead: With group members standing in a circle, place a coin (quarter or nickel) on the forehead of a member. Instruct the group to pass the coin forehead to forehead without using their hands to touch the coin. Group members may assist each dyad making the pass as long as they do not touch the coin with their hands.

Trust Walk

The concept of trust in our lives is sometimes easier to come to grips with if we can experience it physically. The trust walk is one example of a concrete experience that can be used to understand the abstract concept of trust. Pair group members off and designate one or the other of the partners as blind. You may wish to use blindfolds to prevent peeking but simply closing the eyes is sufficient. In fact, not using artificial means of blinding puts added pressure on the blind partner. The seeing partners are then directed to take their blind partners on a walk, giving them as many experiences as possible but always maintaining responsibility for their safety. The entire exercise should be conducted without words. Partners must work out their own strategies for nonverbal communication. After a designated period of time (ten minutes or more), reverse the roles and repeat the exercise. Follow-up discussion should relate the members' experiences to trusting oneself, trusting others, and being trustworthy. The discussion can easily be directed to a consideration of the security factor in group dynamics.

Note: It is often appropriate to demonstrate several versions of leading and following as part of the introduction to the activity. This tends to alleviate some of the anxiety associated with touch and introduces modeling as a legitimate learning tool in the group.

Trust Fall

Another way of demonstrating the concept of trust physically is using the trust fall, which is usually more threatening than the trust walk. Have each dyad move to an area free of objects and with sufficient room to conduct the exercise. Have one partner stand facing away from the other partner with feet together, eyes closed, and body rigid. Simply instruct the person to fall backward when ready. The other partner is instructed beforehand to catch the person. It is usually a good idea to demonstrate this exercise first, especially in terms of showing group members how to catch their partners. Persons with physical problems, such as bad backs, should be cautioned before becoming involved. After several falls reverse positions and repeat the exercise. Discussion can be much the same as with the preceding exercise, but you may wish to add the dimension of relating the trust-falling experience to sharing personal problems with other people you do not know or trust.

Trust Ring

A group version of the trust fall is to have group members form a ring around one person who stands erect, feet together and eyes closed. Upon a signal (verbal or a slight push from the leader) the center person falls toward the ring which is then responsible for catching and moving the person around while maintaining responsibility for their safety.

In this activity an important procedure is for the leader to demonstrate appropriate ways of catching and touching especially for female members. Females can fold their arms over their breasts and catchers from the front can be directed to arms and shoulders rather than the chest area. This activity demonstrates the dynamic of group trust especially in regard to the individual-group interaction. In fact, this activity can be helpful in assisting individual members who are hesitant to place their confidence in the group. Once they experience the group's capability relative to their physical safety, they may be more confident that the group also can be trusted with their psychological safety.

Three Secrets

This exercise gets at the importance of safety and security on a more personal and psychological level. Have each group member write three secrets that they would not tell the group under any circumstances at this point in time. Assure them that they will not have to share them and that no tricks are involved. On completion of the writing have members put the secrets away for safe-keeping, and conduct a discussion centered around why they would not want to share their secrets in the group. Focus attention on the need for developing trusting relationships and confidentiality in the group. Help members come to grips with the threat involved in sharing their private world with others. The information written in this exercise often surfaces later voluntarily when the member feels the group can be trusted. Members who decide to share their secrets will usually preface or follow their self-disclosure by telling the group that they would not have been able to do so before. This tends to bolster the morale of the group and serves as an indication that a trusting climate is developing.

Note: This activity was developed by Dr. Dan Ficek of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Student Counseling Center.

Self-Collage

Self-knowledge, self-disclosure, and self-acceptance are intricately interwoven in the fabric of our identity. This exercise ties these threads together in a manner that is useful in the group-counseling process. Have each person develop a collage using magazines, newspapers, photos, and so on, centered around the question "who am I?" Have each person share his or her collage with the group and describe the connection between the items included and his or her personality and life-style. On completion of the descriptions, have group members comment on aspects of the collage that stand out for them and that they identify with or admire. The focus of this feedback should be on appreciation and affirmation (rather than analysis or criticism) and as a means of identifying similarities (rather than differences) among group members. In the follow-up discussion relate the experiences in this exercise to the process of self-disclosure and self-acceptance.

A Symbol of You

This exercise has merit because it encourages self-disclosure in the initial group sessions. Have each person bring to the group a material object that represents something meaningful in his or her life. Each person in turn presents the object to the group and describes what it is, what it symbolizes, and why it was chosen. A variation of this activity is to have group members go outside and find some object of nature that represents who they are or how they feel. When they return ask each person to show the object and describe its meaning.

One Thing You Value

The concept of acceptance is sometimes difficult to comprehend and this activity can serve the purpose of more clearly differentiating between acceptance and judgment. Have the members think of something they value deeply as a part of themselves. It can be an attitude, belief, characteristic or possession, but it must be something they hold dearly. Form dyads and have the partners in turn describe their value. Instruct the listener to help the speaker explain the value by reflecting or asking questions, but under no circumstances must the listener make an evaluation of any kind. Stress this last point emphatically. After both parties have had the opportunity to be speaker and listener, discuss the experience. Ask if the members followed the rules or if some made evaluations in their minds like that's "like me" or "not like me" or, "I believe that, too." Most likely all group members broke the rule because it's impossible to keep if you become at all involved in the other person's sharing. Point out that acceptance does not mean no evaluation occurs, but it does mean that judgments are not passed. Acceptance is also distinct from condoning, because the latter implies a choice not to act on a judgment that has already been made.

What's Your Bag?

The following activity is an excellent advance organizer for discussion of the Johari window and relationship development. Pass out crayons/magic markers and brown paper lunch bags (you can use grocery bags if you want this to be a big production). Have members decorate the outside of the bag with their name, words, symbols and pictures that portray things about themselves that they would share easily with other people. Once the bag is completed, pass out four blank slips of paper and ask them to write four things about themselves they do not easily share with others. Fold each slip and place it inside the bag. Assure group members that they will not be "*required*" to share what is on the slips of paper inside the bag. Processing the activity:

1. Have group members share their bags (outside) with the group one at a time.
2. When all have shared the outside of their bag INVITE them to share one item from inside the bag. Indicate that each person may choose to decline the invitation.
3. When all have either shared or declined, process the activity in light of self-disclosure relating it to the hidden and open quadrants of the Johari window model of relationship development.

Circles of Relationships

Have each group member create a relationship map using the diagram in Figure 3.6. In each circle have members identify

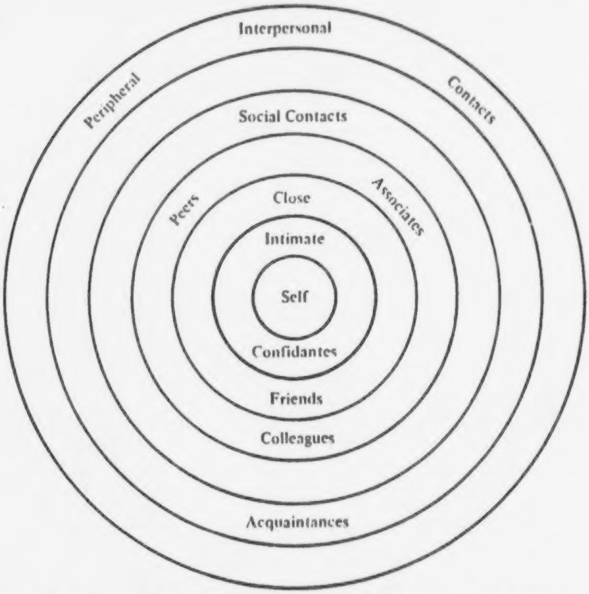
Interpersonal
Peripheral
Contacts
Social Contacts
Peers
Associates
Close
Intimate
Self
Confidantes
Friends
Colleagues
Acquaintances

Figure 3.6. Relationship map. (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986)

by first name or initials, persons in their life who fit in each of the circles. In addition, have them use arrows to represent persons who are moving away or toward them. Solid arrows can be used to designate movement they actually perceive is occurring and dash line arrows can be used to designate persons they would like to move toward or away from. As an indicator of group development have members place group members in their relationship maps. Use the maps as a springboard to discuss characteristics of relationships, identify relationship problems, and assess the current status of relationship development in the group.

Road of Life

A person's life story is sometimes more readily told as a series of critical incidents that stand out in memory. This exercise can be used to effect self-disclosure through the process of describing key experiences in the life of each group member. On a blank sheet of paper, have each person place a dot on the left-hand side of the sheet representing birth and a dot on the right hand side representing death. Have them draw a curvy road representing life's ups and downs between the two dots. Designate a point on the road as "the present." Using symbols such as balloons or clouds attached to the road, have each person indicate past, present and anticipated future experiences (critical or important incidents or events) that are meaningful to them. Then have each person share their "road" with the group. Group discussion can revolve around similarities and differences between members stressing the uniqueness of each person as well as the mutuality of human experience.

Impression-Go-Round

This simple activity is effective in demonstrating the feedback mechanism in group counseling. Have each person in the group give an impression of every other person. This can be handled in one of two ways. The first is to have one person at a time give an impression of every other member. When that person has completed the impression-go-round, the next person does the same and so on. The second method is to have one member be the focal point and the other members in turn give their impressions. When all members have given their impression another member gets the limelight, and the process is repeated until each person has received feedback from all the others. Variations of this impression-go-round include using animals or colors that represent each member's impression of each of the other members of the group. The members in turn share their choices and explain why they chose them.

Self-Actualization (Cognitive Exercise)

Because the nature of self-actualization is very complex and frequently confusing, this exercise can serve to help clarify its meaning. Have each class member write down a personal definition of self-actualization. The definition need not be comprehensive but should reflect the most important aspects of the term in each member's mind. Discuss the definitions, listing on the board the various characteristics. Then divide the class into small groups of four to eight, and have them develop a comprehensive definition of self-actualization.

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Chapter 4

PROCESS OF GROUP COUNSELING

BACKGROUND

The process of group counseling presented in this chapter has emerged from experience in a variety of settings and with a wide range of clients and age groups. Contributing to this model have been my involvement and leadership experience in schools with upper elementary, junior high, and senior high students, at the Minnesota State Prison doing group therapy with inmates and group training with staff, at the university level working with undergraduate and graduate students, in numerous human-relations workshops with a variety of educators, in church-related youth retreat groups, in interracial groups, and in other diverse settings as a consultant. Recently, leading and supervising counseling and therapy groups in private practice and a mental health agency has further developed and refined this model.

Contrary to what might be expected from reading the previous chapter, the basic framework of this process model was developed first (Trotzer, 1972), and the rationale supplied later. In this sense the model is experience-based rather than theory-based and is rooted in observation of actual group interaction rather than in empirical assessment of hypothetical constructs. However, the theoretical, training and research literature of the group field has consensually validated its process components as relevant and applicable in the practice of group work (Conyne, 1985; Corey, 1985; Gazda, 1984; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Rogers, 1970; Yalom, 1985).

NATURE OF THE PROCESS

The model described presents a developmental perspective of group counseling, which is intended for use as an aid in understanding and directing the group process and as a framework for many different theoretical approaches and techniques. The group process itself is divided into five stages. However, the stages are not autonomous or independent of each other. Each stage has certain characteristics that distinguish it, but their meaning and impact are obtained only within the context of the total group process. The duration of each stage is dependent on the nature of the leader and group members. In some cases, the stages turn over very rapidly; in some, the stages are almost concurrent; and in others, a particular stage may continue for a long period of time and can lead to stagnation in the group process, especially if this occurs early.

Rogers' (1967) description of the group process correlates well with this idea of stages emerging and submerging in group interaction. "The interaction is best thought of, I believe, as a varied tapestry, differing from group to group, yet with certain kinds of trends evident in most of these intensive encounters and certain patterns tending to precede and others to follow" (p.263). Each stage of the group is like a wave that has momentary identity as it crests but whose beginning and demise are swallowed up in the constant movement of the sea.

GROUP PROCESS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

The stage cycle of the group process reflects characteristics of our basic human needs and depicts the essential qualities of good interpersonal relationships. The model also mirrors a basic pattern for successful problem-solving. The integration of the stages (see Figure 3.5) into a conceptualization of a method for resolving problem is readily evident. The stages of security, acceptance, responsibility, work, and closing (Termination) are easily translated into a step-by-step procedure for resolving personal concerns. First of all, as we experience problems we can't solve, a natural tendency is to hide or deny them because we don't want negative repercussions in our self-image or in reactions of others around us. Problems threaten our security as persons and our relationships with others. Therefore problems are only shared with others if an atmosphere of safety is part of our relationship with them. The first step is ***security.*** Feelings of trust and confidence reduce risk and facilitate our sharing of personal concerns with others. The amount of trust necessary for disclosing our problems is a product of the combined emotional seriousness of the problem and the quality of our relationships. Some problems we experience force us to use disclosure as a means of developing a trusting climate. For example, a client who has recently undergone a traumatic experience-say a close friend was injured while riding in a car the client was driving-may be motivated by intense emotional feelings to share the problem without first determining if the atmosphere is safe. Such risks are sometimes taken without a foreknowledge of trust in the relationship. However, other problems may have emotional or social overtones that demand an atmosphere of confidentiality before any self-disclosure follows. Examples of these kinds of problems include sex problems, drug problems, and difficulties in relationships with significant others such as bosses, co-workers, parents, teachers, or marriage partner. In any event, step one in resolving our problems is to find a safe place physically, psychologically and relationally where we can talk about them.

The second step is associated with acceptance. Although the term ***acceptance*** encompasses a broad range of concepts, such as acceptance of self, acceptance of others, and acceptance by others, a key point in solving a problem is to accept that problem as a part of ourselves. Until we recognize that the problems we experience are part of us, we cannot act constructively to resolve them. Denial and unwillingness to face our problems are the biggest deterrents to their resolution. The old adage "a problem faced is a problem half solved" expresses the importance of this step. In order to accept our problems, we need to know that recognition of them as our own will not be devastating to ourselves or to our relationships with others. In other words, our own acceptance of our problems is contingent to a large degree on the reactions or the perceived reactions of others. If we are accepted by others in total, if we feel we can show them all of ourselves including our problems and be received with an empathic ear, we are more willing to identify, share, and acknowledge our problems.

Taking ***responsibility*** is the third step in the problem-solving process. After we acknowledge our problems, we also must admit to our part in their cause and shoulder the responsibility to act positively to resolve them. Responsibility brings into focus the action phase of problem-solving. The realization that problem-solving is an active process and that the individual with the problem is primarily responsible for that action is a difficult but necessary step toward resolution. Clients often hope that once they have admitted to, identified, or accepted their problems something almost magical will occur and the problem will be resolved. They sometimes feel that because they have made the courageous effort to reveal themselves, their reward should be instant resolution, or at least that the counselor should take over. Therefore the process of getting clients to take responsibility for themselves is another key step in successful resolution.

The fourth step is to ***work*** out the means whereby the problem can be solved. This involves understanding the problem, identifying alternative solutions, evaluating them, planning and practicing new attitudes or behaviors, and trying them out in the real world. The helping relationship at this point is a working relationship in which all parties exert energy and intelligence toward helping the individual find and implement a successful solution.

The final step is to ***terminate*** the relationship when clients begin to experience success more than failure in their attempts to implement and integrate changes into their lives. Terminating counseling clients should not only realize problem resolution but should have learned the problem-solving process and increased their confidence in using it.

The following discussion will describe the life cycle of a group in which the problem-solving characteristics just detailed will be related to the group-counseling process. Each stage will be discussed separately, considering factors such as major identifying characteristics, focus, leader role, and resulting impact. The A,B,C's of group dynamics will be incorporated into the description of each stage from both the member and leader perspective. A stands for the affective component representing emotions experienced in the group. B is the behavioral dimension indicating how participants act or behave, and C is the cognitive aspect of group experience identifying how participants think and perceive.

THE SECURITY STAGE

The initial stage of the counseling group is characterized by tentativeness, ambiguity, anxiety, suspicion, resistance, discomfort, and other such emotional reactions on the part of both the members and the leader. Members experience these reactions because they are entering a new social situation in which they cannot predict what will occur, and they are not confident of their ability to be in control of themselves or relate well to the group. Even though orientation procedures are used, once the group comes together and interaction begins, the cognitive preparation gives way to the normal emotional reactions experienced in new social situations. Uncomfortable feelings also arise because each member is aware that he or she is in counseling and has personal concerns that are not easily shared under any circumstances.

An example of the inner turmoil a group member experiences was demonstrated by a young woman who requested admittance to a therapy group at a university counseling center. During the first session she paced and stood outside the room, struggling with the decision of whether to enter or not. The group leader, aware of her fears and misgivings about the group, left the door open and indicated to her that she could come in when she was ready. Toward the end of the session she entered the room and stood against the wall but did not join the group until the second session. So extensive was her discomfort that she did not participate until the fourth session and did not risk disclosing anything about herself until much later. Although most group members do not experience reactions to that extent, feelings of discomfort in the early sessions are always prevalent.

The security stage is a period of testing for the group members, and much of this testing can be categorized as resistance and is displayed in the form of passivity, withdrawal, distractibility, uncooperativeness or hostility. Bonney (1969) pointed out that "resistance and hostility toward the leader and conflict among group members are. . .expected outgrowths of the basic insecurity of procedural direction and uncertainty concerning the capacity of the group to achieve its proposed aims" (p.165). The testing takes many forms and is aimed in many directions but the most common challenges are leveled at leader competency, ground rules, and other members' actions. Rogers (1967) felt that negative expressions are a way of testing the trustworthiness and freedom of the group. All persons in the group experience some form of nervousness that generates defending types of behaviors rather than the authentic sharing of feelings and thoughts.

The focus during this initial period must take into account these insecure feelings of members. Underlying concerns that brought the members to the group should be set aside for the moment, and the here-and-now discomfort facing the group should be worked with. Some leaders like to use group warm-ups to help members express and work through these initial feelings and to establish a comfortable rapport within the group. The individual problems of members, though they may be categorically similar, are most likely quite dissimilar in the perception of each member at this point. Thus an important procedure is to establish a common ground so that members can make contact with each other, get acquainted and open lines of communication.

Since each member is preoccupied with dissatisfactions in his or her own life, an immediate focus on any one problem would lead to a rather disjointed process, which would run a high risk of losing the involvement and cooperation of all the members. This type of emphasis might also allow some members to go too deeply too quickly and scare off others. Cohn (1973) warned leaders to avoid this possibility and stressed that one essential feature of the group process is that members must be moved to deeper levels of interaction together. By initially focusing on the discomfort that all are experiencing, a common ground is established, which moves the group toward more cohesiveness. This identification with one another helps members overcome feelings of isolation and lays the foundation for the development of trust (Trotzer, 1972).

A significant aspect of the security stage is the leader's part in sharing the discomfort. Seldom will a leader enter a group without some feelings of uneasiness and hesitancy. These feelings do not necessarily reflect the skill and expertise of the counselor but rather are indicative of the effort involved in working toward closeness between people and helping people with problems. If leaders do not enter groups with some of these feelings, they are probably not prepared to become involved in the very personal worlds of the members.

The leader's role in the security stage is to perform what Lifton (1966) called "security-giving operations." Leaders must be able to gain the confidence of the members, display warmth and understanding, provide for the various needs of members, and create and maintain a friendly and safe atmosphere in the group. Sensitivity, awareness, and an ability to communicate feelings and observations to the group without dominating it are important qualities of group leadership at this stage of the group's development.

As the group resolves the discomfort of the artificial situation, members can begin delving into the problems in their lives, and as members share their common feelings and perceptions, trust develops. Cohn (1964) emphasized this concept of trust, suggesting that once group members trust and are trusted the groundwork is laid for making the effort needed to improve their real-life situations. Rogers (1967) stated that the "individual will gradually feel safe enough to drop some of his defenses and facades" (p.8). The members will become more willing to show their inner selves rather than just their outer selves. They will begin to direct energy toward expression-communication that allows oneself to be known to others authentically and transparently-rather than impression-communication that involves putting on a face in order to attract others (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971).

Ohlsen (1970) also described the impact of the security stage: "When clients come to feel reasonably secure within their counseling group, they can be themselves, discuss the problems that bother them, accept others' frank reactions to them and express their own genuine feelings toward others" (p.91). In other words, the development of trust provides the basis for getting down to the business of working on one's problems. Vorrath and Brendtro (1974) added that the most dynamic experience members gain from the group is that they learn to trust people. So trust has a process dimension and an outcome dimension, which give it a two-fold impact in the group process. During the security stage the development of a trusting, non-threatening atmosphere is the primary objective. This objective is in accord with each member's basic human need for security. As trust increases, the willingness for personal involvement and commitment increases. Members are more likely to risk letting themselves and their problems, frustrations, joys, and successes be known. Because of the atmosphere created by the movement toward trust, the individual members feel freer to be themselves. When this occurs the transition into the second stage of the group-counseling process takes place.

From the leader perspective, the affective dynamics tend to be a modified, mirror-image of members' feelings. Whereas, members may be uneasy, resistent, anxious, and filled with self-doubt, leaders typically experience similar feelings in the form of performance anxiety, anticipatory nervousness, and doubts relative to self-confidence and leadership competence. In the cognitive realm, leader and member expectations may be slightly or greatly incongruent. Member expectations (cognitions relative to how they perceive the group) are influenced by past group experiences, pre-group orientation (if used) or how the group is introduced, and what they have heard or read about group counseling. Leader expectations tend to be based on their conception of what the group is for and where he or she would like it to go in a general sense. This variation in the basis for perception contributes to the ambiguity and lack of clarity as to group purpose and focus. Leader-member cognitive disparity combined with emotional dis-ease produces behavioral activity in the group that validates the underlying discomfort. Nervous gestures and person-specific, social idiosyncracies occur. Over-talking or under-talking coupled with non-verbal cues and messages that are noted but not acknowledged verbally, pursued interactionally or clarified communicationally typify early group interaction.

Leader preparation for the security stage involves pre-group consideration of the following questions:

1. Why is the group being called into existence and what implications does that have relative to process dynamics?

2. What do you want the group to accomplish (goals/objectives)?

3. How will you help the group accomplish the goals for which it was formed?

4. How will you set parameters and ground rules and clarify expectations?

5. How will you proceed in your first session?

Mental imaging is a useful tool in the consideration of all these questions. Minimum preparation for group leaders at the security stage is that they are willing to participate in the affective discomfort of the group, have cognitive clarity about a direction for the group, and have a behavioral repertoire of responses to model and facilitate effective adjustment in the group. The interaction of these three elements creates a sense of security in the group leading to a basic trust level that will enable the group to make the transition to the acceptance stage.

THE ACCEPTANCE STAGE

The acceptance stage is directly related to our need for love and belonging and therefore has many derivatives that influence the direction of the group process. Generally this stage is characterized by a movement away from resistance and toward cooperation on the part of group members. As members begin to overcome the discomfort and threat of the group, grounds for their fears dissipate and they become more accepting of the group situation. As they become more familiar with the group's atmosphere, procedures, leader, and members, they become more comfortable and secure in the group setting. They accept the group structure and the leader's role. This acceptance does not mean the purpose of the group is clear to members, but it does mean they are accepting the method. The meaning and purpose of the counseling group must be derived from the group members not from the group structure.

Inherent in the group members' acceptance of the group as a vehicle for their interaction is their need to belong and the need for relatedness. The members' desire to be a part of the group emerges as an important motivating factor. This desire is inwardly evident to the individual from the outset of the group. But at first it is stifled for fear of acting in a manner that might ultimately jeopardize that belonging. However, with the foundation of trust established, the members are more willing to be their real selves and risk being known for the sake of being accepted. A journal entry of a 34-year-old Vietnam veteran who chose an alcohol treatment center rather than jail effectively depicts the acceptance stage of the group process:

> At first there was no way I was going to admit to being an alcoholic or even that I had a drinking problem. But as I listened to the other guys talk about booze in their lives I began to realize they were all talking about many of the same experiences I had. The first thought that came to me was "Hey, you can't fool these cats because they've been there." I felt lots of pressure to 'fess up' but still held back because I wasn't sure how they (the group) would take me nor was I sure I could stomach myself if I did. I finally decided to share my drinking problems when I saw the group treat another Nam vet in the group in a sensitive way, giving him support and help with a problem I thought was even worse than mine. When I did admit I had a drinking problem, the group seemed to open up to me and let me in, and I also liked myself better.

As acceptance is experienced, relationships grow, and cohesiveness develops. Cohesiveness is important to the group process because it makes group members more susceptible to the influence of each other and the group. It also provides the impetus for group productivity. It is a key factor in the helping process in groups because "those who are to be changed and those who influence change must sense a strong feeling of belonging in the same group" (Ohlsen, 1970, p.88). Thus group cohesiveness meets the members' needs to belong, provides them with a temporary protective shield from the outside world, and is a potent therapeutic factor in the change process.

The therapeutic influence of cohesiveness makes use of peer-group dynamics as its key resource in the group. As members experience genuine acceptance by fellow members, self-esteem is enhanced, ego is strengthened, self-confidence is bolstered, and they develop more courage in facing up to their problems. The impact of feeling accepted by a group of one's peers was stated succinctly by Gawrys and Brown (1963): "To be accepted and understood by the counselor is a satisfying experience; to be accepted and understood by a number of individuals is profound" (p.106). Within this context, then, the potential of peer-group influence can be used in a positive manner by the counselor. The group leader's role in this stage is no small factor in generating an accepting atmosphere in the group and contributing directly to the individual members' experience of feeling accepted. Leaders must be models of acceptance from the onset of the total group process. They must demonstrate a genuine caring for each of the group members. Their leadership must be characterized by acceptance of each person regardless of the behaviors he or she has exhibited outside the group. The process of acceptance is initiated by leaders who practice Rogers' (1962) concept of unconditional positive regard.

Two basic leadership skills are essential at this stage of the group. The first is "active listening" (see page 301) where leaders communicate empathic understanding to each group member. The second is "multi-directed partiality" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986) where leaders communicate partiality, i.e., side with each member in the presence of the other members in spite of acknowledged differences, thus creating a context in which members experience acceptance while at the same time the framework for dialog as a resource for resolving differences is established. As members experience acceptance from the leader, they feel more accepting of themselves and follow the leader's model in their actions toward one another. As members feel more accepting of themselves and other members, a total atmosphere of acceptance is created.

This brings us to the primary objective of the acceptance stage from a problem-solving perspective-developing acceptance of self. For members' problems to surface in the group they must feel free to be truly themselves without fear of rejection or reprisal. As already stated, members cannot deal effectively with their problems without recognition that the problems are a part of them. Further, they must know that even though they have problems they are still persons of worth and importance. All people have the desire to like and accept themselves and to be liked and accepted by others. This desire is what the group utilizes in helping members deal with their problems. When each member can accept feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, whether good or bad, as part of self and still feel accepted and respected as a person of worth, a big step has been taken in the helping process of the group.

The focus during the acceptance stage should be on the whole person and not just on isolated problem areas. In order to attain self-acceptance and acceptance of others, members must work with the total picture of themselves and others. Getting to know oneself and each other, engaging in "who am I?" and "who are you?" activities, serve to promote self-disclosure. As individuals share themselves and describe their problems, accepting problems as part of themselves occurs more naturally and is less threatening. Many leaders like to integrate the first two stages of security and acceptance, using structured personal-sharing activities and techniques to do so. In this way sharing promotes trust, and trust encourages sharing. Members find that many of their concerns are similar to those of other members. This similarity among members leads to identification with each other and the group and facilitates openness. As members can speak more freely about their problems, they find they can embrace them without losing self-esteem or position in the group; and this experience paves the way for the more individualistic stage of responsibility.

Results of the second stage a big order to fill, and it is. But acceptance is also a powerful force in facilitating the problem-solving process. When established, it removes many of the roadblocks in the counseling process. It enables the group to begin constructive individual help. The development of acceptance accomplishes three main objectives (Trotzer, 1972).

1. It aids the group in becoming cohesive and close thus meeting Gendlin and Beebe's (1968) guideline that "closeness must precede unmasking."

2. It helps each individual feel accepted as a person of worth even though life is not satisfactory at the

moment. This meets Gendlin and Beebe's (1968) guideline of putting "people before purpose."

3. It releases the potential of peer-group influence to be used in a positive rather than negative manner.

The affective dynamics of the acceptance stage place leaders in somewhat of an emotional quandary as they grapple with their role in the group. As members feel more comfortable and experience a growing sense of camaraderie and belonging, leaders feel a sense of being "in-between." Issues such as, "Am I part of this group or not part of this group?" and "How much should I be leader and how much should I be a person?" emerge to create mixed emotions which pull them into the group and push them out at the same time. Feelings of wanting to be more personal contrast with the desire to maintain an emotional distance.

In the cognitive domain the leader is aware of the need for personally relevant topics and information to be shared and that a total person emphasis needs to be maintained to give the group balance and stability as the relational bonding occurs. Norms are forming which give the group security and predictability, but the leader is responsible for seeing that these norms are dynamic and therapeutic.

Behaviorally, the leader notices that self disclosure increases and that feedback is given on an experimental basis. He or she sees members exhibit the rudiments of helping behaviors and realizes more dramatically the importance of leadership in modeling and facilitating appropriate group actions. Content of the group interaction addresses the purposes and problems that called the group into existence, and the leader must act to meld the relational and helping dynamics to key the transition to responsibility.

Questions leaders must ask and answer at the acceptance stage are as follows:

1. What is my relationship as a person and a professional in the group?

2. How can I best assist the bonding process of the group?

3. What norms are forming in the group, and are these norms conducive to therapeutic impact?

4. How does the content being shared relate to the purposes of the group?

5. What can I do to merge the relationship development process and the problem solving process?

As the leader addresses these questions in a framework of developing a group identity and building cohesiveness, the groundwork is laid for movement into the responsibility stage of the group process.

THE RESPONSIBILITY STAGE

The third stage of the group-counseling process is characterized by a movement on the part of group members from acceptance of self and others to responsibility for self. A subtle but distinct difference exists between acceptance of and responsibility for self. Acceptance helps members realize and admit that problems are a part of their selves. However, acceptance alone leaves members with an avenue of retreat away from working on their problems. Members can say "yes, that's the way I am" or "that's my problem" but can disclaim any part in its cause or rectification. Acceptance alone allows members to claim no fault and negates any responsibility for doing anything about changing. The inclusion of responsibility, however, moves members toward resolution. The combination of acceptance and responsibility encourages members to state "yes, that's my problem, *and* I have to do something about it." The ground is thus made fertile for constructive change to take place.

A divorced mother with two children who shared her problems and frustrations in a women's counseling group at a mental-health center exemplifies the difference between acceptance and responsibility. During the fourth group meeting she talked extensively about the pain of her divorce and the subsequent difficulties of trying to raise her children along. She became very emotional at times, and the group facilitated catharsis in a very sensitive manner. At the end of the session the group leader helped the woman put herself back together emotionally and solicited feedback from the group couched in terms of support. During the following session she was again the focus of attention, but this time members began to suggest alternatives that could possibly help her improve her life. To each alternative she responded by saying, "I already tried that" or "I don't think that would work." After several attempts to get her to consider alternatives failed, one member observed that maybe she really didn't want to do anything different in her life to overcome the problems. The woman denied that but soon afterward asked that the focus of the group attention be directed elsewhere. During the following sessions this woman's problem was brought up several times by herself, other group members, or the leader, but the discussion always stalemated at the point of her taking any responsibility for the problems or for initiating changes. Eventually she told the group that she felt her problems were the result of others being unfair and insensitive to her and that she was a victim and not a cause in her situation. Soon afterward she left the group. She was willing to share her problems in the group but was not able to see herself as a contributor or take the initiative to work toward resolving them.

The issue of responsibility in the group emanates from both our needs as human beings and the nature of the problem-solving process. Members can only meet their need for esteem and respect through actions and achievements that require the person to take responsibility. If members feel causes are external they will also feel the cures must come from sources external to themselves and not from their own efforts, resources, and initiatives.

Our needs are reflected in the pressure of the counseling group to move on. The social aspect of cohesiveness developed in the acceptance stage wears thin after a while, and a natural tendency is toward getting down to the business of problems. This tendency, according to Bonney (1969), is a mark of group maturity in that group members begin to accept responsibility for the management of the group and exert their energies to the task of problem-solving. As members take increased responsibility for themselves and the therapeutic process, their chances for growth within the counseling group improve. In fact, Lindt (1958) found that only those who accepted responsibility in the helping process of the group benefited from their experience.

During the early stages of the group process the task is to develop trust and acceptance by focusing on similarities among members. This process universalizes. It helps members recognize that their problems are experienced by others (universalization), even though individual differences are apparent (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1979; Yalom, 1985). During the responsibility stage the focus changes to individualization and differentiation based on each person's uniqueness and responsibility. The atmosphere of the group provides for considerable personal freedom with the implication that members have permission to explore their weaknesses, strengths, and potentialities; to determine a way of working on problems; and to express feelings. The here-and-now emphasis is a key component in the responsibility stage, but it takes on a broader, problem-oriented perspective. During the early stages of the group the here-and-now is restricted to present feelings about the group and one's part in it. At this point, however, the focus expands to the individual lives of the members helping them to focus on their here-and-now problems outside the group as well. This can be done in a step-by-step process in which expression of feelings is the starting point. The expression of personal feelings and perceptions about self and others is one basis for learning responsibility in the group. To emphasize taking responsibility for what one thinks and feels, leaders can ask members to state their own perceptions or feelings and to tack on the statement "and I take responsibility for that." In this manner members learn to take responsibility for expressing hostility and caring and can offer constructive criticism without the threat and risk usually associated with the expression of such feelings or observations.

As the members learn to accept responsibility for their personal feelings and perceptions, acceptance of responsibility for their actions and eventually their problems becomes easier. These steps must be taken if the counselor and the group are to have any significant impact on the individual member's life. Mahler (1969) emphasized the importance of responsibility for oneself: "Counselees must realize the importance of being responsible for their own lives, behavior, and actions, making their own decisions and learning to stand on their own perceptions" (p.140). He added that "People need opportunities to learn that only by taking actions, making decisions, and accepting responsibility for their own lives can they become adults in the full sense of the word" (p.141). Group counseling gives them that opportunity.

The leader's role during this stage centers around helping members realize self-responsibility. Lakin (1969) and Glasser (1965) stressed the modeling nature of the leader role in which the counselor's actions must depict the proper attitude toward responsibility. Glasser felt that responsibility can only be learned through involvement with responsible people. Therefore the member's primary example to follow in the group is the leader. The leader must help members maintain a focus on themselves and their problems at this point, rather than on events, people, or situations external to the group and beyond its influence. The counseling group can only affect people and situations through its effect on the person in the immediate presence of the group. The counselor must stress an internal frame of reference rather than an external one. The question that ultimately must be faced is not "what can others do?" but "what can I do?"

The leader faces a crucial issue during the responsibility stage, and a word of caution is apropos. In our concern for our clients to "make it on their own," we often see opportunities in the group process that could be used to "teach" members responsibility. This situation must be avoided. For group members to become responsible they must experience responsibility, not be told about it. At times the issue of responsibility can be appropriately brought up and at other times confrontation will need to be used with members who have not recognized their responsibilities. Regardless of other action the choice to be responsible should be left to members. Mahler (1969) felt that "counselors who teach in group counseling violate the concept that basic responsibility for management of one's own life is up to the individual" (p.103). Therefore leadership should be directed toward helping members feel accepted and responsible without domination. When successful, members will feel more personal, individual responsibility and will exhibit less dependency.

The responsibility stage sets the tone for the remainder of the group-counseling process. Once members realize their responsibility for themselves and understand that while the leader and the group will hold them accountable neither will infringe upon it, members can direct their entire attention to problem-solving. The responsibility stage affirms the inherent worth of members, assures them of respect as human beings, and points out qualities necessary to enhance self-worth and resolve problems. Those qualities are self-assessment, congruence, honesty, responsibility, and commitment. When the members willingly engage in the introspective process, self-disclose, demonstrate their acceptance of others and willingness to help others, and—with very little or no help from the leader—take responsibility, the work stage of the counseling process if imminent.

The affective dimension of leadership experience is a useful gauge reflecting the process dynamics in the responsibility stage. As members struggle emotionally with responsibility and commitment the leader experiences a greater sense of clarity as to his or her role in the group. A sense of confidence evolves which facilitates ease of movement as the leader enabling him or her to be resourceful and to maneuver effectively using a variety of appropriate roles. Leaders begin to trust their intuitions and impulses in this particular group and feel more capable in the leadership position.

In the cognitive domain, the leader consciously shifts focus from a "forest-trees" point of view to a "trees—forest" perspective. Whereas, in the earlier stages leader emphasis is given to context (forming the group out of individual components), the focus now changes to components (differentiating individuals in the group context). The uniqueness of each person and each person's role becomes important and the goal evolves from giving members an "I belong" experience to giving them an "I contribute" experience as they go from "being part of" to "taking part in" the group.

Leaders also notice significant behavior changes in the group. Members begin to use more "I language" increasing their reliance on and utilization of first and second person pronouns rather than third person referents in their interaction with each other. Members are more prone to describe their actions in specific terms rather than using general descriptions, jargon, or colloquial aphorisms. Finally, more confrontations begin to arise drawing the leader into a mediating role.

While the responsibility stage is the most difficult to delineate as a stage, it is of crucial importance to the group process because of its impact on the group's ability to engage in "critical thinking" which is so essential to problem-solving. Janis (1971; 1972) identified and researched the phenomenon of "groupthink," a process that cohesive and bonded groups substitute for "critical thinking". He stated: "the more amiability and esprit de corps there is among members of a policymaking ingroup, the greater the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed against outgroups" (p.44). Applied to the group counseling process, this means that groups which develop through the security and acceptance stages but do not move into responsibility will introduce interactive mechanisms and behaviors that will undermine and subvert critical thinking, distort reality and generally detract from therapeutic problem-solving. Consequently, leaders must be especially sensitive to danger signals that come not only from individuals (members who resist being responsible for their own lives) but from the group as well.

Key questions for the responsibility stage are the following:

1. What can I do to enhance the emergence of each member's individual identity in the group?

2. How can I facilitate individual responsibility for self and problem ownership as a group norm?

3. Is the dual commitment of taking from the group (group as a resource for individual problem solving) and giving to the group (being a resource to other members) emerging?

4. Are the interactions and perspectives emerging in the group in touch with reality inspite of the supportive bonding in the group?

5. What obstacles (resistances) stand in the way of the problem-solving process, and how can they be addressed?

As noted, the responsibility stage is the least definitive process-wise, but the most critical progress-wise, so answering these questions will prepare the way for therapeutic work.

THE WORK STAGE

The character of the work stage organizes itself around the individual problems and concerns of group members. As trust, acceptance, and responsibility are experienced and learned, what becomes increasingly evident is that some areas in each members' life are not satisfactory and could benefit from change. When these areas are pinpointed and discussed specifically, the work stage goes into full operation. Vorrath and Brendtro (1974) felt that the core of the group process is reached at this point, because the goal of any counseling or therapy group is to work on problems and get them solved.

The work stage of group counseling is exemplified by the interaction of a human-relations group designed to improve communication and relationships between racial groups in a large urban high school. The members decided that the basic problem was not knowing how to approach students who were racially different from themselves. They tended to be hesitant, fearing overtones of prejudice might be communicated. To work on this problem, the leader first had racially similar members discuss their perceptions of racially different groups and then make suggestions that they felt would facilitate better relationships. After each subgroup had discussed their perceptions and made their suggestions, a comprehensive list of suggestions was developed in terms of skills. The leader then formed racially mixed dyads to try out the suggestions. During their work stage, partners were rotated periodically to give members the experience of trying out alternatives and building their skills and confidence with all racial groups represented.

The basic purposes of the work stage are to give group members the opportunity to (1) examine personal problems closely in an environment free of threat, (2) explore alternatives and suggestions for resolving the problems, and (3) try out new behaviors or attitudes in a safe setting prior to risking changes outside the group (Trotzer, 1972). The energy of the group is concentrated on accomplishing these three purposes through the use of clarification, feedback, support, encouragement, information-giving, skills training (Gazda and Brooks, 1985), strategic planning and in vivo practice. Once in motion the productivity of the group is quite amazing and at times needs to be held in check because of the tendency to begin to solve problems before they are fully understood.

The leader role in the work stage is extremely vital from two perspectives. Leaders must be both facilitator and expert. They must be able to facilitate the discussion of problems, bringing out as many facets as possible, and create an atmosphere where alternatives can be suggested. These two processes entail mustering the total perceptual and experiential resources of the group. After a particular problem has been discussed and alternative solutions suggested, leaders must use their expertise to provide vehicles for examining the consequences of the suggestions as a means of aiding the decision-making process. These activities can take the form of role-playing, sociodramas, communication exercises, or discussion. In this way alternatives can be assessed and evaluated, thus avoiding shot-in-the-dark failures. This type of reality testing in the group provides the group member with an idea of both the feasibility of a specific alternative and the effort involved in using it to resolve the problem. It also provides the member with an opportunity to develop self-confidence before attempting to make any specific changes in the more threatening world outside the group.

Another important facet of the group process that surfaces during the work stage is the dual role of the group member as both the helper and the helped. When any one member of the group is working on a particular problem, the other members provide help through their feedback, sharing, suggestions, discussion, and participation in group activities. The experience of being in helpers roles increase members' feelings of self-worth because now they are in the position of giving rather than receiving. The giving of assistance to others also produces a more congenial attitude toward receiving assistance from others. The two-way process of helping and being helped is thus established. This process makes good use of members' altruistic tendencies, as well as allowing them to engage in "spectator therapy" when they benefit from watching others work out their problems.

During this stage the group also represents "society in microcosm" (Gazda, 1968); that is, group members represent, as best they can, the forces, attitudes, reactions, and ideas of the world outside the group. Through the process of feedback the group helps each member develop realistic alternatives to problems that can reasonably be applied in their lives outside the group. This mini-society function is important because of its transitional value in preparing members for the task of implementing changes.

In the work stage the "healing capacity" (Rogers, 1967) of the group emerges, and the specific goals and objectives of the counseling group are dealt with. Each group has different objectives based on the diversity of the group membership and the setting in which the group is formed. However, since most counseling groups are usually organized to deal with specific problems, at this point in the group process is where efforts are focused on resolving them. The work stage prepares members for reentry into the world where they are experiencing their problems. They are armed with a well-conceived and evaluated plan, and self-confidence has been shored up through practice and personal encouragement. However, individuals do not have to make the changes and implement their plans without some support which the group provides until such time as termination is appropriate.

The approach-avoidance dynamics of initiating change and resisting change that emerge in the work stage can be emotionally draining. Leaders often experience this stage as a combination of excitement and frustration. As members mobilize around the motivation provided by their need to actualize their potential, they run smack into resistances that hinder their growth and development. Their resulting frustration may be shared by the leader who has become personally attached in some degree to each group member and the process of problem solving each person is experiencing. When added to the leader's professional commitment to being personally effective, a sense of challenge may emerge that entices leaders to overstep boundaries of responsibility in trying to do too much for their clients. This emotional bonding is indicative of effective process dynamics, but must be kept in balance by parallel dynamics in the cognitive domain.

Leaders are cognitively aware that the norm of problem-solving is operationalized and must keep in mind the parameters that will most effectively ensure that both the process and product are personally relevant to each group member. So, while being emotionally supportive, leaders must actively remind themselves of their role in being a reality check to the group process and its members. In addition, maintaining a clear conceptual perspective of fundamentals of effective problem-solving is essential. This awareness produces leader behavior that facilitates helper-helpee role reciprocity in group members and enables the leader to act as a resource in problem-solving. Behaviors that present the process expertise of the leader emerge as he or she provides tools and vehicles (e.g., initiates activities such as role playing) to help group members address their problems.

The more capable leaders are of monitoring their own affect, cognition and behavior, and the more successful they are in maintaining a balance between support for and perception of group members, the more effective their actions will be in the work stage. Questions that help leaders apprize their role at this stage are as follows:

1. What is my relationship to each group member? (How do I see each person and the problem(s) each is addressing?)

2. What resources do I have that can be mobilized to guide, direct and assist the problem-solving process?

3. How can I most effectively carry out my role with respect to the relationship between group process and social reality?

4. How can I most effectively mobilize group resources in doing therapeutic work?

As each of these questions are answered, the resulting success in problem-solving will naturally raise the issue of termination for individual members and/or the group as a whole.

THE CLOSING STAGE

The final stage of the group-counseling process is mainly supportive in nature and is characterized by feedback, encouragement, and perseverance. Although group members may successfully work through their problems within the group, they still face the difficult task of modifying their behavior and attitudes outside the group. The expectations of significant others outside the group are still based on past experience with the group member, thus making it difficult to give encouragement or reinforcement to the member for acting in new or different ways. The group is a place where members can share their frustrations, successes, and failures and also reassess their actions for possible changes that will increase their effectiveness. Without a source of support, the potential for regression to old ways is greater.

The group also serves as a motivator. Part of this function entails rejecting excuses and confronting members with their own lack of commitment and effort if need be. Sometimes members need to be pushed out into the real world when they cannot venture forth on their own. The group has uncanny competence in assessing whether members are authentic in their efforts and whether they have performed up to their capability. During this stage the group can be both a sounding board and a control board.

Group support facilitates the integration of change into the client's life. Efforts to change and the change process itself are supported until reinforcement occurs in members' lives outside the group. As changes become more natural parts of their lifestyles, the difficulty of adapting new behaviors, feelings, and attitudes decreases. The support of the group is only necessary until the balance between ease and difficulty in implementing change swings to the ease side of the scale.

The focus of the group thus turns to members' behavior and experience outside the group and deals with progress they are making. The leader helps members discuss their experiences and feelings, offering support, understanding, and encouragement. The leader also helps members begin to take credit for their own changes instead of giving credit to the group or the counselor. In this way the individual members can integrate their new behaviors and attitudes into their everyday lives and can feel reinforcement from within themselves rather than from the group.

The closing stage for individuals may take many different forms. For example, a student who had been a member of a therapy group at a college counseling center for three years began to miss group meetings, showing up periodically but with longer time lapses between attendance. As he entered the final semester of his senior year, he relied less and less on the group for feedback and support taking more and more responsibility for himself. His need for the group and his involvement in the group lessened, with termination coinciding with graduation.

Another example of the closing stage is the standard procedure used at an alcohol treatment center when individual patients are preparing to leave treatment. The patient's group holds a graduation ceremony for the departing member during which that person makes a commencement address reviewing and summarizing their treatment and describing goals and objectives for the future. The group then engages in a serenity prayer during which group members give support, feedback, and encouragement to the graduating member. The person is then presented with a coin that has a missing piece symbolizing the unending process involved in rehabilitation and growth. The ceremony thus serves to summarize and reinforce changes that have occurred but also prepares the person for the rigors of adjusting to life outside the treatment center.

The point at which a group or individual member should terminate is sometimes difficult to determine. For this reason groups are often terminated on the basis of a preset time schedule, for example, after ten sessions or at the end of a quarter or semester. However, ending a group is also appropriate when group members experience more success than failure in solving their problems and feel intrinsic rather than extrinsic reinforcement for their actions in doing so. As members become more dependent on themselves, they lose their dependence on the group. As they resolve their problems and learn how to solve problems, they no longer need the group. When any of these situations occur the group has run its course and should be disbanded.

The leader's affective experience of the closing stage typically includes ambivalence. Personally, a certain amount of overinvolvement may have occurred which mitigates against members terminating. Professionally, the realization that the effort expended to make this group work will have to be repeated with another group may produce feelings of resistance relative to closure. The natural inclination to desire affirmation as a person and professional may produce feelings of incompleteness or even insecurity if such feedback is not forthcoming. Consequently, for leaders to have approach-avoidance tussles emotionally with respect to closing is not unusual.

Cognitively, the purposes of termination are quite clear: (1) to translate closing into commencement; (2) to continue the impetus of the change process beyond the life of the group; (3) to ensure that closure does not disrupt or undermine growth or generate regression; (4) to provide a therapeutic exodus from the group for each participant including the leader; and (5) to enable group members to assume credit and responsibility for their own changes. These purposes can be addressed through behaviors that incorporate a process and product review regarding the history of the group and each of its members. Using self-disclosure and feedback tools, marker events, successes, failures and nature of the experience can be shared. Looking ahead to future goals and anticipating potential predicaments is also common in the closing stage. Sometimes members, out of a sense of nostalgia or simply to hang on, will manufacture problems or recycle old problems to keep the group going. This tends to be rather short lived, however, since the momentum to get on with life already has set the disbanding process in motion. Celebratory and symbolic termination gestures reflecting individual personalities and the group milieu emerge enabling members and leader(s) to say good-bye.

Questions leaders need to address in the closing stage of the group process are as follows:

1. How can I assist members in detaching and/or the group in disbanding in a therapeutic manner?
2. What is the degree of my investment in the group and what do I need to do to detach effectively?
3. How can I facilitate closing so that it preserves progress and serves as a commencement to continued growth?
4. What resistances to closing are evident and how can they be reframed into initiatives for ending?

With termination, the history of the group as an entity is complete. However, the impact of the group may carry beyond the life of the group itself involving the leader in individual member's lives either by choice (follow-up) or circumstance. Either way, the closing stage may include some spillover dynamics that will persist even though for all intents and purposes, the group officially ends with the last meeting.

A PRECAUTIONARY NOTE

Viewing group counseling as a developmental sequence of a set number of stages raises the possibility of unnecessary and undesirable rigidity in conceptualizing the group process. To circumvent this and maintain flexibility in this group model, it is necessary to remember that within each stage there can be many levels. Different degrees of trust, acceptance, and responsibility are reached by the group and its members at different times. Some problems discussed in the group require less trust than others. At other times recycling the process may be necessary, developing deeper levels of trust, acceptance, or responsibility in order to deal with a particular problem. Bonney(1969) labeled this phenomena "retransition" referring to the tendency of groups to go back through the early phases of group development before proceeding to a deeper level. At any one time and with any one problem or person the group may have to retreat to a previous stage before it can move to the next one. In fact, all stages may recur several times before the group has run its course.

The recycling of stages is particularly evident in open-ended groups where individual members terminate and other members join, all in the course of the ongoing group life. Each exit and entrance sets off dynamics that are the impetus for recycling elements of earlier group stages so as to reform the group into a therapeutic entity consisting of the current participants.

Another consideration is that components of two or more stages may be prominent in the group at the same time. The group may be learning trust, acceptance, and responsibility while working on a particular problem. The group does not develop in a lock-step manner even though general trends can be noted and specific characteristics consistently appear at certain points in the group's development. Neither can the group process be forced to conform to an external standard or model. Rather, it is a responsive and flexible process that is influenced by the leader's personality, by differences between people and their problems, and by variations in the rate at which different people develop relationships and work out individual change.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Group counseling brings into perspective the relationship between psychological needs and the socialization process, whereby human learning and problem-solving occur through interaction. It accentuates the social learning process by focusing on the dynamics of the group itself rather than on some environmental context. Group members are given the opportunity to learn how they function individually and interpersonally. They can do this because the leader and other members have created a climate or atmosphere characterized by psychological safety and acceptance where they can take responsibility for their own lives. In such a situation members can experience the healthy attributes of individuality or uniqueness and relatedness or conformity. They learn both independence and interdependence.

Members can express themselves freely and engage in open and honest interaction with other members without the fear of rejection or reprisal that so often tempers interaction in one's environment. Within the group, members can experience and learn responsibility. They can confront problems openly, knowing they will obtain support and assistance as needed. Members experience the interchanging role of being the helper and the helped as they work on their own problems and assist others with theirs. The member can discover and evaluate alternative solutions to personal concerns while at the same time building self-confidence and personal security, which serve as enabling factors in implementing change outside the group. Thus group counseling provides both a setting and a process whereby the basic objectives of counseling and therapy can be attained.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activities presented here are organized in sequence to relate to the stages of group development discussed in this chapter. Although the primary characteristic and use of each activity is stage-related, they can be used for many other purposes. These activities are versatile and adaptable, depending on the leader's approach and the nature of the group.

Trust Ring

Option 1. This activity is useful in demonstrating the characteristics of trust and confidentiality that are necessary for a group to work effectively. Have all group members stand in a circle in an area that is free of material objects such as chairs or tables. Have group members join hands strongly gripping the hand or wrist of the persons standing beside them. Members should have a strong grip on each of their partners' hands or wrists. Then have the group extend out as far as possible forming a taut circle. Instruct all members to lean back exerting pressure on the circle and slowly move their feet toward the center of the circle creating a centrifugal pressure on the group. Have the group move in a clockwise direction maintaining this centrifugal pressure. After a few moments reverse the direction. Follow the activity with a discussion of each person's reaction in terms of the amount of pressure he or she was personally willing to place on the group and feelings regarding his or her partners and the total group. Stress the importance of the whole group going to the aid of individuals who were slipping in order to protect them and maintain solidarity in the group. Discussion also can focus on the amount of pressure the group as a whole exerted relating it to risk-taking in self-disclosure and feedback.

Option II. A variation of this exercise is to have members stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Instruct members to interlock their arms around the back or waist of the persons beside them. Then have group members lean inward and slowly move their feet away from the center of the group creating a centripal force on the group. Have the group move alternately in a clockwise manner. At the conclusion of the exercise have the group members retain their interlocking positions in the circle and discuss the reactions in the same manner as described in Option I. An added feature of this discussion can be the impact of closeness created by the "arms around each other" dimension, relating it to the effect of warmth and closeness in developing cohesiveness and trust in the group.

The Trust Ring exercises of Options I and II were developed by Jim Ross and demonstrated in my group-counseling class at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Closed Fist

This activity lends itself to a consideration of strategies used by people in negotiating trust in human relationships. It is particularly applicable to group counseling because of the risk intrinsic to the process of sharing. Break the group down into dyads. Ask partners to exchange some material object that they value (such as a ring, a picture, or a wallet). Have each partner put the object away out of sight for the time being. Then instruct members to think of something that is extremely valuable to them, something they would not wish to give up under any circumstances. Give the group a few minutes to choose something. Then ask one of the partners to figuratively place the thing of value in a closed fist without telling the partner what it is. Instruct the other partner to try to get it. Allow this process to proceed for a time without any intervention. Then ask for an account of what happened, noting the different strategies that were used to obtain the object and pointing out their relevance to the group process. After this discussion ask members to try to get back the actual objects they exchanged initially.

Important factors to consider in this activity are the type of exchange strategies that produce competitiveness, cooperation, ill will, and positive interpersonal feelings. Strategies that are conducive to positive relationships should be used in the group. Also, the value of the objects exchanged reflects the amount of commitment and trust in the relationship. Members will share more willingly and at a deeper level if other members share reciprocally.

This exercise was demonstrated by Dr. Dan Ficek in a Human Relations Workshop he and I led in Red Wing, Minnesota.

Life Story

Vorrath & Brendtro (1974) used this technique to introduce new members into the group. It is especially appropriate for ongoing counseling groups that experience member turnover. New members after a brief period of time in the group are asked to tell their life stories as completely and as accurately as they possibly can. The life stories should include a description of problems that brought the new people into the group. The other group members have the responsibility of facilitating the new member's efforts. Under no circumstances should views of the person be challenged at this point. After the story is completed the group can begin to work with discrepancies or other factors that might relate to solving the member's problems. The main impact of this technique is that members realize their side of the story is going to be heard first. They receive guarantees that their frame of reference is important and will be considered by the group. They experience acceptance and find the group is a safe place to air their problems.

Poem of Self

This activity helps establish a minimum level of self-acceptance for each group member and helps the group become involved in introspection and self-disclosure essential to the group process. Use the following directions in carrying out the exercise.

1. List four words (adjectives) that describe what you look like.

2. List four words (adjectives) that describe what you act like (personality).

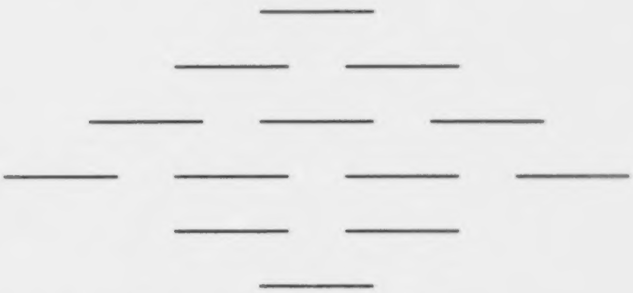
3. List five words ending in "ing" that describe things you like to do (if you like to read, put reading).

   Words may be created by adding -ing to any word that represents an activity, e.g., tennis-ing.

4. List six things (nouns) that would remind people of you (possessions, such as a guitar, or roles you play, such as a student, for example).

5. List four places you would like to be.

6. On a sheet of paper draw the following diagram (you may want to hand out a mimeo form).



7. On the first line of the diagram write your full given name.

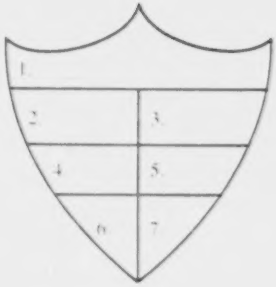
8. Choose one word from list 1 (what you look like) and one word from list 2 (what you act like) and place them in the blanks in line 2.

9. Choose three words from list 3 (things you like to do) and insert them in the blanks in line 3.
10. Choose four words from list 4 (things that remind people of you) and write them in the blanks in line 4.
11. Choose two words from list 5 (places) and write them in the blanks in line 5.
12. On the bottom line write a nickname or any name by which you are called other than your given name. (This may be a derivative of your given name, such as "Toni" for Antoinette.)

On completion of the poem have each member read his or her poem to the group twice, the first time quickly with rhythm and the second time slowly so that they can catch all the words. After everyone has read and explained the meaning of the words in their poems discuss how the activity contributed to getting to know one another.

Coat of Arms

The coat of arms has more depth to it than the poem of self and can be used in conjunction with it. This activity gets at more varied aspects of each person's life and provides a good beginning for the actual counseling process. It also combines the medium of illustration with verbal description, which makes sharing an easier process. Give each person a sheet of paper with the following diagram on it or have the people draw it. Then have them fill in the numbered sections of the shield according to the following instructions.



1. In the section numbered 1, write a motto or phrase that describes how you feel about life or that is a guide to your life-style. (Some people create their own; others use slogans, proverbs, quotations, poems, or Bible verses.)
2. In section 2, draw a picture that represents your greatest achievement or accomplishment (no words).
3. Draw a picture that represents something other people could do to make you happy (no words).
4. Draw a picture that represents a past failure or disappointment in your life (no words).
5. Draw a picture that represents the biggest goal in your life right now (no words).
6. Draw a picture that represents a problem you would like to work on in this group (no words).
7. Write three things you would like people to say about you if you died today (or write your epitaph).

After all the members have completed the shield, have each member describe his or hers to the group, explaining the meaning of each section. This exercise has the positive impact of acceptance since it deals with each person's strengths, weaknesses, goals, relationships with others, and problems. The instructions for the various parts can be changed to meet the demands of the situation and the needs of the members, thus making this activity a flexible and effective tool in the hands of the group leader.

Alternative instructions:

Draw a picture that represents:

—a talent, ability or gift you have.

—an important person in your life.

—an important decision you have made.

—a special interest, hobby, or recreational pursuit.

Write your pet peeve.

Gestalt Interventions

One of the ways we avoid being responsible for ourselves and in control of our own lives is through the words we use in communication (Stevens, 1971). The following intervention techniques drawn from the Gestalt approach to group therapy can be used to help group members take responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and ultimately for their problems.

1. ***Questions or Statements.*** Many questions that group members ask are really camouflaged statements. Before responding with an answer ask the questioner to change the question into a statement that expresses personal perceptions, observations, or feelings.

2. ***I Can't/I Won't Statements.*** Members often use the words "I can't" in discussing problem situations, which give the impression that control is really outside of themselves. When you hear an "I can't" statement ask the member to repeat the statement using "I won't," which conveys the message that the person has a choice in the matter. "I just can't talk to my father" changes to "I just won't talk to my father."

3. ***I have to/I Choose to Statements.*** Have group members make a list of "I have to" statements describing all the things in their lives that they feel they have to do. Have them share their lists in the group. Then have them change "have" to "choose" and discuss the difference such a change makes in their perception of their list. Discussion usually pinpoints quite clearly the issue of personal responsibility and choice. As a group leader you also can ask members to substitute "I choose to" for "I have to" during group discussions. In doing this the members realize that they are responsible and that they do have a choice.

4. ***I Need/I Want Statements.*** Group members often express desires as needs, creating the impression that severe personal consequences will result if needs are not met. They say "I need," which depicts whatever it is as

essential to their well-being. To define more accurately what really is needed and what can be done without, have members change "I need" statements to "I want" statements and discuss which is more appropriate, incorporating feedback from other members as to the accuracy of the statement.

Problem Identification and Rating

The work stage is the point in the group process at which problems should be dealt with directly. This activity pinpoints problems that are pertinent to individual members and are relevant to other members' lives as well. Have the members anonymously write a description of a problem they would be willing to discuss with the group. Stress the "willing to discuss" aspect. When the descriptions are finished, read them one by one to the group. After each problem is read, ask members to individually rate it on a scale (5 is high and 1 is low), showing their interest in discussing the problem and their identification with it. Record each individual rating (remember, this is a "rating" *not* a "ranking.") and after reading and rating all the problems, add up the totals. A hierarchy of problems develops based on the scores. Reread the highest rated problem and ask the person who wrote it to describe it in detail. The group can then work with that specific person and problem.

This procedure results in a hierarchical agenda, but if the group is particularly effective in helping the first person, other members may decide to reveal deeper problems with which they want help. The problem agenda and hierarchy should be adhered to only if it is in the best interests of the group. Rigid structuring of the group focus could deter progress.

Strength Bombardment

Otto (1967) first posited the idea that problems could be solved by starting with strengths and then focusing on weaknesses. That premise is particularly relevant to the responsibility stage of group development. One means of helping group members accept responsibility for themselves is to approach it from a perspective of strengths, assets, and accomplishments of which the member is already aware. This activity uses the processes of self-disclosure and feedback to help members take responsibility for their behavior. First, have each group member develop a list of accomplishments or achievements. Encourage the members to feel completely free about the list and not to think about the reactions of others or about the ego-related emotional connotations such a request usually conjures up. On completion of the list, have the members write a paragraph, starting with "I am," that describes only their positive qualities. Assure them that no one else will see the paragraph, but indicate that they should include only positive qualities and not put in any negative ones. When the paragraph is completed have members put it away, stating that they can do what they want with it, possibly keeping it tucked away to pull out for a "rainy day" ego boost. Now have the members share their initial list of accomplishments with the group. Then place two chairs facing each other in the center of the circle. Ask one member to volunteer to take one of the chairs in order to receive positive feedback from the other members. When one person has taken a chair, each other person in turn gets up, sits in the opposite chair and gives the first person only positive feedback. There should be no "I would like you if" or "I like you but" comments, and the person receiving the feedback can only respond with expressions of appreciation, not with denials or counter remarks. This process continues until each person has received positive feedback from every other person in the group. On completion of the activity, relate the experience to the issue of responsibility and discuss how one's positive qualities can be used as resources to help overcome one's negative qualities and problems. This activity is useful as a springboard to the work stage of the group process.

Awareness and Responsibility

This technique has developed out of the Gestalt approach to group therapy and combines the concepts of personal awareness and individual responsibility. It has relevance to group counseling because it clarifies where members are personally and helps them take responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the group. Each group member is asked to share with the group thoughts, feelings, and perceptions or observations using the format: "Right now I am aware. . .(members complete the statement describing what they are aware of), and I take responsibility for that." The last part of the statement is added to get individuals to affirm their own part in feeling, acting, or thinking the way they do and to prevent them from putting responsibility on others. A leader can effectively use the last part of the statement by simply asking members to add it to any statement involving a personal emotion, accusation, interpretation, or perception. In this way, the impact of the statement becomes just one person's frame of reference and allows other members the freedom to respond as they see fit without feeling threatened by the imposition of another person's point of view on them.

Behavioral Problem-Solving

Many times group members have difficulty resolving their problems because they lack specificity. Have members write down three personal concerns with which they are struggling and then briefly describe them to the group. Then have each member select one of his or her concerns and describe it in detail following the four basic behavioral steps:

1. Describe in behavioral terms what you do not like or what is wrong (***problem***).

2. Describe in behavioral terms what you would like to change or how you would like to be (***goal***).

3. Discuss with the group how you might be able to accomplish your goal and develop a strategy for doing so (***plan***).

4. Try out the plan and report back to the group on your progress (***evaluation***).

For the last two steps a contract system (Dustin & George, 1973) is helpful where the group member writes the plan in the form of a contract. He or she signs it in the presence of witnesses which increases the individual's commitment and gives the group a solid basis for follow-up, reinforcement, encouragement, and evaluation of progress. Some groups use ***Goal-Boards*** to keep the group cognizant of each person's goal and progress. A check-in system is then used each session to chart the change process.

Go-Round

One of the simplest and yet most versatile and effective exercises that can be used in group counseling is the "go-round." As the name implies this technique involves going around the group person by person, giving each a specific opportunity to respond. This technique has many variations and purposes and fits at any stage of group development. For instance, a "go-round" is a good way to begin a group to find out what everyone is thinking or feeling and to get some cues about how to proceed. A "go-round" when a group ends gives members the opportunity to say what they have not had a chance to say and is a good way to tie up loose ends. During the group sessions, go-rounds immediately following critical incidents are useful to air feelings and release tension, as well as to move the group on to the next phase of the process.

Feelings Face

This activity is a useful tool for ending an individual group session or an overall group experience. Have group members draw a caricature of a face that represents their feelings about the group experience on an 8 x 11 sheet of paper. On each corner of the paper have members write a different word or phrase describing their experience in the group. When completed, have them fold the corners of the page back so only the face is showing. Instruct the group to mill around the room showing their faces to other members on a one to one basis. Members are to guess what the other person's face is portraying. After guessing, each shares one of the words/phrases written on a corner explaining the reasons for their feelings. When each group member has shared all their corners (four in all), they turn their faces in to the group leader.

An alternative mode for processing the feelings face is to share the faces and the feelings in the group. The leader also can have each member share the face and feelings sheet with him or her as an exit visa from the group.

Feelings Doodles

A modification of the previous activity is to have members create an "eyes closed" doodle attempting to portray their feelings. The same format can be used to process the doodle as is described in the "Feeling Face" activity.

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Chapter 5

PROCESS TO PRACTICE

TURNING GROUP DYNAMICS INTO FORM AND FUNCTION

Developmental psychology's most significant contribution to our knowledge of human beings emanates from the basic premise that by understanding normal functionality, we are able to facilitate and enhance normality as well as accommodate to and correct abnormality. Its methodology entails the study of organism change phenomena to identify sequences of events that constitute normal growth and development over the organism's life cycle. These sequences or stages once clarified serve as the reference base when any individual unit of the organism is encountered. Consequently, development principles are relevant to any organism or organization that evolves through developmental phases that have sequential and life cycle dimensions. Individuals, relationships and groups all qualify as being developmental in nature. As we have seen in the previous chapter the group process is a specific example of the developmental psychology perspective.

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

Simply understanding the development of a counseling or therapy group is insufficient since the utility of that process only has meaning if transformed into a pragmatic application that helps people change. In other words, process dynamics must be translated into form and function as well as serve as our evaluative criteria for determining if the process is evolving appropriately. This chapter is designed to bridge the gap between process and practice. The developmental concept most relevant to this chapter is that given typical conditions, growth or change in any organism unfolds predictably in a sequence of stages each of which involves certain developmental tasks (Havighurst & Neugarten, 1968). These tasks must be addressed for successful completion of a particular stage to occur and serve as the basis for proceeding to the next stage. They are the building blocks of the organism's growth and development. How they are addressed determines how a particular organism will adjust and function. Over time, how these tasks are handled will indicate where the organism will fall on the continuum of normality and whether it will be typical or atypical. The stages of the group process contain such developmental tasks. They are embedded in the development dynamics of the ongoing process. The purpose of this chapter is to identify those tasks and demonstrate their relevance to the structure and utility of the group as a therapeutic change agent. Each group stage will be re-explicated in terms of specific developmental tasks. Implications for using the tasks as a basis for structuring the group process will be discussed. The phases of an individual group session which generally reflect process dynamics and developmental tasks in prototypical form also will be described. The chapter will conclude with a set of task-related group activities.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS: SEEDS OF FORM AND FUNCTION

Every group has a structure that develops and evolves in the course of the group being formed and interacting through its life cycle. Landreth (1973) has pointed out that the question is not whether structure exists in groups but rather what kind of structure exists and how it is generated. Impetus for structure emanates from any number of sources alone or in combination.

> Leader personality, training and theoretical orientation, the focus and purpose of the group and the individual and collective nature of the group members all affect group structure. In addition, contemporary group process has been influenced by the evolution of group techniques and activities that are being used as structuring

> tools to implement and facilitate the group process. (Trotzer, 1979, p.177)

These structural agents, however, require material to respond to for their impact to be realized in the group. That material is supplied by group dynamics of which developmental tasks are an integral part. Each stage of the group process has inherent tasks that depict the sequential nature of the group's development.

> A developmental task is an objective, need or responsibility which must be addressed in the group in order to insure therapeutic and constructive progress. As these tasks are dealt with effectively, the result is a stronger foundation for group interaction and an achieved readiness to continue the group process through closure. If inappropriately handled or ignored, these tasks can present obstacles that disrupt the group or become the basis for resistance which is detrimental to group development. Thus effective group interaction is contingent upon a structure which considers the developmental tasks as the group moves through its life cycle. (Trotzer, 1979, pp.179-80)

The interface between the structuring agents and the developmental tasks creates the actual form the group develops and produces the function that the group serves in the lives of its members. The tasks are guideposts to which structural factors can relate in guiding, stimulating, and facilitating the group.

The developmental tasks corresponding to each group stage will now be described. In Figure 5.1 is graphically depicted the relationship among stages and tasks. A brief summary of each stage will precede explication of its developmental tasks

As described in Chapters 3 and 4 the process of group counseling therapy is composed of five stages which reflect characteristics of our basic human needs, qualities of therapeutic interpersonal relationships, and dynamics of problem solving. Each stage has certain traits which distinguish it, but its meaning and impact are evident only in terms of the total group process. Although leadership style, techniques, group purpose, and membership vary, these stages tend to emerge and evolve as part and parcel of most group interactions (Trotzer, 1985).

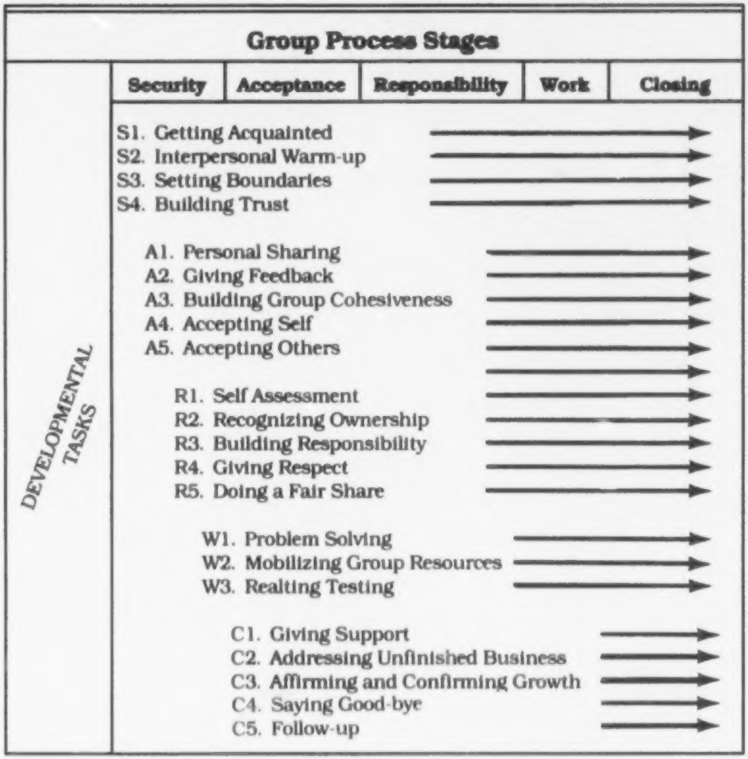
Group Process Stages
Security
Acceptance
Responsibility
Work
Closing
DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS
S1. Getting Acquainted
S2. Interpersonal Warm-up
S3. Setting Boundaries
S4. Building Trust
A1. Personal Sharing
A2. Giving Feedback
A3. Building Group Cohesiveness
A4. Accepting Self
A5. Accepting Others
R1. Self Assessment
R2. Recognizing Ownership
R3. Building Responsibility
R4. Giving Respect
R5. Doing a Fair Share
W1. Problem Solving
W2. Mobilizing Group Resources
W3. Realting Testing
C1. Giving Support
C2. Addressing Unfinished Business
C3. Affirming and Confirming Growth
C4. Saying Good-bye
C5. Follow-up

Figure 5.1. Group Process: Stages and Development Tasks

SECURITY STAGE

The initial stage of the group process is characterized by feelings of discomfort common to forming interpersonal relationships in a new social environment. Group members are reluctant to interact because their presence in the group is contingent on some recognized purpose that requires personal vulnerability. The purpose of this stage is to develop an atmosphere in which members can relate without hesitancy and where discomfort is alleviated as trust develops. This stage is referred to as the security stage because it must account for each group member's needs for psychological safety and initiate trust which is essential to therapeutic interaction and necessary for members to disclose personal problems.

The developmental tasks of the security stage collectively combine to accomplish the objectives of getting the group started and laying a foundation of trust which can be broadened and deepened as the group interacts. Five developmental tasks are identified for the security stage.

Task S 1. Getting Acquainted

The goal of this task is to help group members make initial contact with one another. This task is particularly important when convening groups composed of members who do not know each other. Getting acquainted breaks the social ice of new relationships and provides a means by which members can begin to move toward one another in their relationships. It also enables members to begin to find their place in the group and alleviates some of the ambiguity associated with possessing little knowledge of the people with whom the individual member is interacting. As members become acquainted with each other, an important security plank is laid for relationship development between members.

Task S 2. Interpersonal Warm-Up

This task relates to the period of time at the beginning of each group session that group members need to warm-up to one another. As such, its goal is similar to getting acquainted with more far reaching implications. Group members have social muscles which need to be warmed-up each time the group reconvenes. Group members need to have the time to focus—to move from their lives outside the group to their experience in the group. Interpersonal warm-up allows them to do that. Group participants must be helped to get totally into the group in a way that does not precipitate undue stress and that alleviates the problems of jumping in too fast. Effective interpersonal warm-up allows members to get in touch with themselves, the group, and their confidence in the group which is essential to developing a sense of security.

Task S 3. Setting Boundaries

Boundaries or ground rules serve an important security giving function for members. By establishing guidelines under which the group will operate, members sense limits which remove much ambiguity. Boundaries also help the group members get a grasp on where they are, how they are expected to fit in, and what they can expect. The group environment becomes more predictable and thus more within the member's control. Boundaries also provide a focus for testing and resistance which in turn further clarify the arena of interaction for members. Whether group rules are established by the leader, developed by the group, or invoked as the need arises, they facilitate trust by providing members with concrete guidelines to govern their interaction. They are a form of protection and insurance against personal harm in the group, and they are the seeds from which group norms develop.

(See Figure 5.2 for a sample of group groundrules.)

Task S 4. Building Trust

The goal of this task is to help group members deal with the dynamic of trust in the group. It involves both experiencing and understanding trust as it pertains to interpersonal relationships in the group. Members must confront what is meant by trusting self and others and come to grips with where they are as both trusting and trustworthy individuals within the group. Members need to realize and be open to the developmental nature of trust as the foundation upon which risk-taking in the group is based. Trust building, once initiated, is an on-going task which, by necessity, must be continually responded to if the group is to develop an indepth personal quality to its interaction.

ACCEPTANCE STAGE

The acceptance stage of the group process focuses on the development of group cohesiveness which is an outgrowth of our psychological need to belong. Caring and being cared about are

(Continued on page 151)

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP MEMBERS

1. Let others know what your ideas are. What every member has to say is important. Sharing your thoughts and reactions with the group will stimulate other members and will help them to share what they are thinking about.
2. Ask your questions. If you have a question or there is something you want to know more about, ask. There is no such thing as a stupid question in this group. Several other members probably want to know the same thing.
3. Don't do all the talking. Others want to participate also and they can't if you take too long to express your ideas.
4. Help other members participate. If someone looks as though he wants to say something but hasn't, encourage him to do so. You could say "Joe, you look as though you'd like to say something." Silent members may especially need your support and encouragement to participate verbally. Don't overdo it though. A member doesn't have to talk to be involved in what is going on.
5. Listen carefully to other members. Try to listen so intently that you could repeat what the other member has said to his/her satisfaction. You aren't listening effectively if you are thinking about what you are going to say when you get the chance. Give the other person's ideas a chance and try to understand what he or she is saying. Listen to him or her the way you would want him or her to listen to you.
6. Group members are here to help. Problems can be solved by working cooperatively together. In the process of helping others, you can help yourself. The information you have can be helpful to others. Suggesting alternatives or causes can help other members to make better decisions.
7. Be willing to accept another point of view. Don't insist that you are right and everyone else is wrong. The other person just might be thinking the same thing. Try to help other members understand you rather than trying to make them understand.
8. Keep up with the discussion. If the discussion is confusing to you, say so.
9. In this group it is okay to talk about your feelings and reactions (p.373).[1]

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[1] From "Group Counseling: To Structure or Not to Structure," by G. L. Landreth, *The School Counselor*, 1973, *20*(5), 371-374. Copyright 1973 by the American Personnel and Guidance Association. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5.2. Sample group ground rules.

Figure 5.2. Continued.

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP SESSIONS[2]

1. Everyone who is here belongs here because he is here, and for no other reason. (This is our top rule. It depends on nothing else. Nothing changes it.)

2. For each person what is true is determined by what is in him or her, what he or she directly feels and finds making sense in himself or herself and the way he or she lives inside himself or herself.

3. Our first purpose is to make contact with each other; everything else we might want or need comes second.

4. We try to be as honest as possible and to express ourselves as we really are and really feel-just as much as we can.

5. We listen for the person inside living and feeling.

6. We listen to everyone.

7. The group leader is responsible for two things only; he or she protects the belonging of every member, and he or she protects their being heard if this is getting lost.

8. Realism: if we know things are a certain way, we do not pretend they are not that way.

9. What we say here is "confidential"; no one will repeat anything said here outside the group, unless it concerns only himself or herself. This applies not just to obviously private things but to everything. After all, if the individual wants others to know something, he or she can always tell them himself or herself.

10. Decisions made by the group need everyone taking part in some way.

11. New members become members because they walk in and remain. Whoever is here belongs.

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[2] From "An Experiential Approach to Group Therapy," by E. T. Gendlin and J. Beebe, III. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 1968, 1*(2), 24-29. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 5.2. Continued.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GROUP

1. No matter how hard you may find it, participate. You ***cannot*** make progress unless you get involved and allow yourself to experience your true feelings and reactions to others in the group. Question, challenge, say what you feel. Try to be as open and honest with yourself and others as you possibly can.
2. Make the group part of your life. In other words, don't think of group as something that happens one day and then forget about it until the next day. After the group session, think over what happened. What feelings did you feel when you talked about your self? You may feel depressed or happy after group. Try to figure out why you are feeling this way. Take a few minutes to write these things down. Discuss it next group.
3. You are not in group to be tactful or popular. Be yourself whatever that takes. Show the group all sides of your personality.
4. Don't wait for a "golden opportunity" before you start talking or getting into your feelings. Make your own openings. Likewise, if you feel bored and think that the person who holds the floor is going nowhere, tell him/her so!
5. This is your group. If it is not moving in the direction you would like it to move, say so!
6. Try to move into areas that are emotionally uncomfortable to you, both inside and outside the group. You grow in your treatment only by going beyond the limits you have set for yourself in the past.
7. Experiment in and outside the group with new forms of behavior. Unless you start to act differently and do take some risks, you will not change!

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essential therapeutic qualities in this stage because members need to experience acceptance as a total person before they are willing to disclose those parts of themselves that require change. As group cohesiveness develops, a supportive milieu is formed in which the norm of personal sharing is reinforced and where disclosing problems is an integral part of a total person perspective. The tasks associated with the acceptance stage are directed toward pulling the group together as a unit in which communication channels are opened and where members are experiencing belongingness, warmth, and acceptance.

Task A 1. Personal Sharing

The goal of this task is to establish self disclosure as one of the primary means of interacting in the group. Personal sharing involves learning the skill of self disclosing and the presentation of self as a total person including problem areas. Individuals make choices that begin the process of letting the group know who they are. The information shared is that which they are in control of and generally involves some risk-taking. Luft (1970) refers to this information as the "hidden" area of the person which is a relational context is subject only to that person's recall and choice relative to disclosure. This task is essential because it provides the main communication channel by which the group can come to know and understand its members. It is also the major means available to members to let others know who they are. Personal sharing is progressive in nature because the degree of self disclosure increases within the context of group interaction provided conditions are supportive. Personal sharing opens the door for potential intimacy in the group, and paves the way for personal vulnerabilities and resources to emerge.

Task A 2. Giving Feedback

The task of giving feedback is essential to the group process because it provides the communication channel whereby members can disclose their perceptions and observations about others. It is also crucial to problem solving in the group context. Members need to learn the skill and precautions of giving feedback. (See Figure 2.1). Feedback is a means of increasing members self knowledge in that it taps into what Luft (1970) referred to as the "blind" area—what others know about us of which we are not aware. Like personal sharing, giving feedback involves risk-taking and is progressive in nature as facilitated by conditions in the group. Giving feedback provides another major channel of communication in the group which is necessary if the potential for intimacy of a therapeutic nature is to be realized, and the group's resources are to be mobilized in a helping manner.

Task A 3. Building Cohesiveness and Closeness

This task develops a positive relationship between group members by harnessing the power of peer influence to generate group cohesiveness. The goal is to achieve togetherness and identification with the group thus providing members with a sense of belongingness. It is based on helping members recognize similarities and common characteristics and falls in line with Gendlin and Beebe's (1968) concept that closeness must precede unmasking. It is intended to help the group realize their groupness and experience working together under the common bond of their group experience.

Task A 4. Learning to Accept Self

The main point of this task is to help group members learn to accept themselves more readily through expression of their identity and characteristics in an atmosphere of support. As group members experience the acceptance of the group, they become more cognizant of their own selves and their own need to accept themselves. This results in a greater feeling of self confidence and self worth and provides a stimulus to treat others in like manner. It also makes members more open to looking at those aspects of self that are not as desirable with the intention of initiating a serious effort toward change.

Task A 5. Learning to Accept Others

This task is important to development of sensitivity among group members. Through the process of supportive listening, observing leader and member acceptance models, and risking one's own self through self disclosure, members find their own feelings of worth are enhanced because others treasure and desire their acceptance. In reality, the last two tasks are reciprocal in nature. Either can be the initial thrust but once in motion, the two become self perpetuating. Therefore, groups often move quickly to a cohesive state once these two tasks have been addressed.

RESPONSIBILITY STAGE

The responsibility stage of the group process emerges from our psychological need for esteem (respect) which is acquired through responsible individual action and experiences in therapeutic relationships where individuals are pecelved as worthwhile. Members move from an emphasis on acceptance of self and others to evaluating self and others in terms of ownership of behavior, feelings, thoughts, and responsibility for one's own part in them. The problem-solving process is contingent on individuals recognizing responsibility for their problems and group members making a commitment to help each other work on them. As this occurs, the group moves into the working phase of the group process.

Responsibility stage tasks seek the objective of generating individual commitment to the group in terms of willingness to be accountable for their own behavior and to contribute responsibly to the group process.

Task R 1. Self Assessment

The focus of this task is to give members an opportunity to engage in self evaluation as a means of identifying their own uniqueness. The thrust of self assessment is to focus on individualization and differentiation between members for purposes of getting members to view responsibility from an internal perspective. Members must realize that looking at oneself realistically is essential and that engaging in constructive self criticism is healthy. In doing so, the foundation for responsible action is laid.

Task R 2. Recognizing Ownership

Part of being responsible for self includes ownership of thoughts, feelings and behavior. The goal of this task is to help members adopt an internal frame of reference with respect to claiming their own actions. This is especially important in group problem solving because if members do not perceive themselves as contributors to their concerns and problems, they will not view themselves as responsible for changing to resolve them. If causes are viewed as external (someone else's fault), then cures will be perceived in the same manner.

Task R 3. Experiencing and Building Responsibility

The main purpose of this task is to help members engage in actions that take the initiative in being responsible not just being told to be responsible. Since responsibility is so closely tied to self worth, this task purports to enhance self worth by helping members put themselves directly on the line relative to their interaction in and out of the group.

Task R 4. Giving Respect

This task presents a balance to the self oriented thrust of the responsibility stage. It is important as a means of checking the tendency of the group to encourage individuals to "do their own thing" even to the detriment of others. Giving respect entails recognizing other people's needs and rights in the process of attempting to meet one's own needs and claim one's own rights. This task asserts that mutual respect is an essential entity if different individuals are to grow in different directions with each other's help. Glasser (1965) has noted that the mark of a responsible person is being able to meet one's needs without depriving others of meeting their needs. This task assists members in their growth toward being responsible people.

Task R 5. Doing a Fair Share

The goal of this task is to attain and actualize a commitment from individual members to help one another by serving as a constructive resource when another member is working on a problem or concern. This task also provides a balancing effect enabling group members to continue to contribute their fair share to the therapeutic endeavors of others regardless of their own status at the time. This task has special impact because it teaches interdependency and helps members realize a necessary balance between self interest and societal responsibility.

WORK STAGE

Purposes for which the group was formed and the relevance of the group to individual members emerge as foci in the work stage of the group process. The atmosphere and relationships in the group are such that individuals can (1) examine personal concerns without fear of reprisal or rejection, (2) explore alternatives for resolving problems, and (3) experiment with new behaviors in a safe environment prior to risking changes in the outside world. Members participate in the interaction as both helpers and helpees and have the opportunity to engage in spectator therapy as they observe other members working on concerns that may be similar to their own. The leader as both expert and facilitator contributes to the process by encouraging members to be resources to persons working on their problems and keeping the group in touch with reality. The work stage prepares group members for re-entry into the world outside the group by arming them with well thought through plans, plausible skills or behaviors, and bolstered self confidence. Emphasis is on implementation and integration of change, but not without the continued support of the group.

The primary purpose of the tasks in the work stage is to put the group to work on the collective and individual issues which brought the group into being.

Task W 1. Problem Solving

The major goal of this task is to help members learn and experience the problem-solving process. This process includes

a. identifying, clarifying, and understanding the problem;

b. generating alternatives to resolving the problem (divergent thought processes, creative thinking, and brainstorming);

c. evaluating alternatives (convergent thought processes, critical thinking, and reality testing);

d. decision making (choosing a viable alternative);

e. planning (developing a strategy for implementation); and

f. practice (trying out new behaviors in the social laboratory of the group).

Task W 2. Mobilizing Group Resources

The ultimate effectiveness of a group is determined by the extent to which resources of that group are utilized to achieve the best possible solution relative to individual needs and problems. The purpose of this task is to facilitate the helper role of group members and make good use of their resources which encompass a broad range of life experiences, knowledge, and skills. Mobilizing group resources extends the helping potential of the group and is a means of enhancing the self esteem of group members who realize their own value through giving assistance to others.

Task W 3. Reality Testing

The goal of this task is to make sure that the group engages in interaction that results in realistic understanding of problems and their solutions. The importance of this task is tied to the fact that members must function effectively outside the group. Therefore, to promote the mental health of members and to increase the probability of constructive change occurring in their lives, the group must act responsibly in terms of providing realistic feedback, alternatives, and information. If group members do not embrace this responsibility, they are acting in a manner detrimental to the therapeutic process.

CLOSING STAGE

Since the overriding objective of any therapeutic group experience is ultimately to dissolve the group by resolving the presenting concerns for which the group was organized, the closing stage serves a valuable transitional function. It is characterized by members actively pursuing change in their lives outside the group while still experiencing the support, encouragement, and pressure of the group. The members use the group as a sounding board and the group acts as a reinforcing and motivating agent. Once the individual has begun to experience success, either through external or internal means, and has begun to take credit for the change, termination is appropriate. Closure brings the group experience to an end by enabling members to be responsible for themselves, reinforcing changes that have occurred and giving members help in moving smoothly back into the mainstream of their own lives. The basic objective of the closing stage tasks is to help members effectively conclude their group experience.

Task C 1. Giving Support

The goal of this task is to give members psychological support during the period of time when they are implementing changes in their lives outside the group. This support may take the form of encouragement, reinforcement, or confrontation designed to foster positive action by members in their own environments. The intent is to provide support without creating dependency so that members can learn to function effectively on their own. Part of this task may include revising, substituting, or refining action plans to facilitate effective change in the member's life. The provision of support is necessary only until members have integrated the changes into their lives to the point of experiencing internal reinforcement and positive recognition from their environment.

Task C 2. Addressing Unfinished Business

As groups move toward termination, unfinished business may emerge as a critical component of the ending process. Unfinished-business issues may stem from a variety of sources and how they are addressed carries significant weight in the overall effectiveness of the group. Notice that the unfinished-business task is process oriented ("addressing") rather than product oriented ("finishing"). It is generally improbable and unfeasible that all issues can be resolved before a group terminates but a valid and serious effort needs to be made to address them.

The source of unfinished business may be individual group members or the group process. Individuals may feel they still have issues on which to work or that their concerns have not been completely resolved. Interpersonal relationships within the group may produce unresolved relational issues and events in the group's history that may still need processing.

The goal of this task is to allot time and energy to address unfinished business whatever its source as a means of clearing the way for termination.

Task C 3. Affirming and Confirming Growth

The goal of this task is to review, summarize and reinforce what has been learned through the process of group interaction. It builds self confidence in members and generates a dependence on self rather than the group. Affirming growth relates to each member's self disclosures of learning and change that have occurred as a result of group involvement. Confirming growth relates to group feedback acknowledging change in individual members thus giving credence and value to the process of change and the result.

Task C 4. Saying Good-bye

The goal of this task is to provide an opportunity for members to terminate their group experience. Saying good-bye provides a stepping off point at a time when ending may be difficult due to relational bonds forged in the group, time restrictions, or the particular focus of interaction in the group. It precipitates closure to the group experience when an individual leaves, a group session ends, or a group disperses and eases the transition of members back into their on-going life experiences.

Task C 5. Follow-Up

This particular task is sometimes difficult to address effectively but is important if the impact of the group is to be minimally sustained. The goal is to make provision for an after-group contact with group members for purposes of assessing whether proposed goals and changes have been realized and continue to be an integral part of group members' lives. Another feature of follow up is as a stimulus to rekindle motivation to change and growth that may have receded since the group disbanded.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS

The relationship between group process and group structure becomes clearer in the context of developmental tasks which elucidate the life cycle of a group. These tasks both substantiate and facilitate the group process and provide a focal point for the various factors that constitute structure. As counseling and therapy groups proceed through the tasks of various stages, structural dynamics are revealed in different ways.

One or all of the structural dynamics noted may be operational in a group at any particular time. However, whether their impetus is purposes, leader, activities, members, or any combinations thereof, stage related developmental tasks provide a concrete conceptual basis for construing group process.

Natural Progression

Groups which have clearly defined and consensually agreed upon purposes move naturally through the various tasks and stages enroute to achieving their objectives. The impetus for this progression is the group's purpose but since groups have an inherent life cycle, the group interaction accounts for the tasks thus making both the process and the outcome therapeutic. In other words, purposes impose a structure that process carries out in order for those purposes to be effectively realized.

Noting Obstacles

Barriers evident in a group at any one time are usually indicative of the stage in which the group is and pinpoint tasks that need to be addressed to move the group forward. Identification of impasses and resistance and initiating appropriate action to overcome them are the bailiwick of the group leader. For example, if the group is characterized by suspicion and distrust, the leader might initiate or facilitate a focus on the developmental tasks of the security stage. Thus the leader's impact on structure materializes.

Structuring the Group Process

Group leaders can control the sequence and flow of group interaction by using the developmental tasks as the basis for selecting group activities. These activities are thus incorporated directly into the group process and create a structure that has conceptual validity.

Member Initiative

Within each individual group member a drive is toward self enhancement which often surfaces as the motivating force to move the group along in the developmental process. Boredom and frustration among members stuck in one place in the group process, pain of individual problems that need attention, and individual enthusiasm to grow and learn will stimulate members to force the issue of structure and thus deal with appropriate developmental tasks that will help the group process.

INDIVIDUAL GROUP SESSIONS

Each individual group session represents in prototypical fashion the overall group process and elements of developmental tasks that pertain to the stage of development the group is in as well as certain tasks that pervade the entire group process. As such, each session is a picture in miniature of the total process as well as a step in the evolution of that process. Just as the life cycle of a group has stages, a group session has sequential phases that are distinguishable. These phases evolve and merge as the group interacts, but in most cases they are evident to some degree in each session. Acknowledging, understanding, and accounting for these phases will enhance the group process and facilitate the most effective interactive pathway for the group to follow. The basic phases of each session are (1) the energizing phase; (2) the advance organizing phase; (3) the working phase; (4) the processing phase; and (5) the closing phase. Each will be elaborated upon identifying key characteristics, developmental tasks that pertain and its role, purpose, and focus relative to the group process (Trotzer, 1980).

The phases of a group session as described in this section can be used as a cognitive overlay for groups at any point in the group process. Doing so enables the group leader to maintain a balanced perspective of both the overall group process and the specific events of a particular session. This produces a flexibility and dynamism that avoids the errors of "not seeing the forest for the trees" (getting myopic with regard to a specific group session) and "not seeing the trees for the forest" (missing the specifity and importance of individual group sessions in the overall process).

Energizing Phase

The energizing phase of a group session is the period of time at the beginning of each group session that is used to get members connected or re-connected to each other and the group. It is the timeframe during which group members shift focus from their lives outside the group to their experience in the group. During the early stages of the group process, this phase is closely related to the "get acquainted" task but throughout the group process it is related to the "interpersonal warm-up" task.

The transition from outside the group to inside the group is always an important issue each time a group assembles. Kassera and Kassera (1979) pointed out that leaders can facilitate more effective beginnings if they make an effort to recognize and respond to the dynamics involved in initiating a group interaction. For example, activities called "energizers" can be used to facilitate contact between group members preparing them for interacting with one another and tuning in to the focus of the group session.

The key goals of the energizing phase are to stimulate a "here and now" perspective and generate a present oriented readiness to concentrate on the tasks and experiences of the group session. This phase is primarily one in which members clear their minds of distractions and attain an in-group focus laying the groundwork for the advance organizing phase. Initially and at certain resistance points in the group process, the energizing phase may be extended to as long as 15 to 30 minutes but once the group is formed beyond the security stage, the time needed for members to clear their minds and connect with each other is generally reduced to 5 to 10 minutes.

Advance Organizing Phase

The initial struggle of any learning effort is to connect the attention of the learner to the material to be learned. This is particularly crucial to the personal learning involved in counseling or therapy. If something can be done to trigger curiosity, invoke relevance, stimulate interest, or enhance motivation, the whole process of learning is accelerated and becomes more exciting and engaging. The advance organizing phase of a group session is the period of time during which the group moves from being in the group to being involved in the group. While the energizing phase serves to connect group members with the group and each other the advance organizing phase serves to connect the group to the focus for which the group was convened.

The advance organizing phase is an in-group transition phase in which members interests are aroused and connected to the theme, purposes, and business of the group. "Advance organizers" designed to prepare members for involvement or set a group agenda are helpful in this phase. For example, many groups use "go-rounds" to identify topics, problems, or issues that members wish to discuss during the session as a means of planning the agenda for the session and allocating time.

Developmental tasks of the various stages often surface as content areas during the advance organizing phase. Issues such as trust, cohesiveness or accountability/responsibility may be raised as the group works on making itself a more therapeutic environment. Once the group is fully operational, however, the tasks of the work stage tend to predominate as members focus on problem-solving.

Except for periods when the group is at an impasse or when resistance emerges either in the form of process obstacles or member's obstructing their own process, the advance organizing phase of a group session tends to be brief, and concrete signalling the group to get down to business.

Working Phase

The working phase is the heart of a group session. Whether the work is process work (dealing with the forming process of the group) or content work (dealing with the purposes for which the group was formed and problems of individual members), this phase carries the most weight both in terms of time and effort. Here again, the developmental tasks of the stage the group is in are reflected in the work being done. The group addresses the agenda items created in the advance organizing phase and does the therapeutic work it was designed to do. Members work on problems, try out solutions, practice skills, and generally use the group as a social laboratory for problem solving. Or, they may focus on themselves as persons or the group as an entity. Either way, the group is activated in the working phase.

Processing Phase

The processing phase of a group session is adjunct to but distinct from the working phase. It has meaning because of what occurs in the working phase, but adds an invaluable dimension to the work because it consolidates, validates, and integrates the learning that has taken place. The processing phase is the time period near the end of each session in which the group reviews or reflects back on what occurred in the session. Processing may be directed at either the group's functioning or the individual members' efforts or both. The closing stage tasks of giving support, unfinished business, and affirming and confirming growth are reflected in the processing phase.

The processing phase is a first step in detaching from the group experience as the group and its members step back to look at themselves and their efforts. As they do so a shift occurs from being experientially engaged to being cognitively engaged. Processing is essential because it helps members summarize, personalize, and generalize what they have learned about the group, each other, and themselves. During this phase members synthesize and apply their group experience making it a more integral part of their lives.

A typical tool of the processing phase is the "go-round" in which members share their reactions, insights, and perspectives on the group experience. The timeframe tends to be brief, usually no more than 5 to 10 minutes, but under certain circumstances this can be extended. Certain events in the group or particularly crucial incidents may require extensive processing for the group or certain individuals. Under such circumstances processing may dominate a significant portion of the session. In more structured groups where agenda items direct the work phase, processing may be interspersed during the course of the session after each item on the agenda has been addressed. However, the typical case is for processing to be relatively brief serving as a springboard for the closing phase of a session.

Closing Phase

The closing phase deals with the dynamics of leaving a group session. Just as starting is an issue at the beginning of a session, closing is an issue at the end. The closing phase should provide a meaningful transition from the world inside the group to the world outside the group. It should aid and facilitate leaving, opening the door for members to reconnect with their world outside the group, but should also project their thoughts toward the next session. As such, closing is a delicate process because it is done under time constraints (most groups have a scheduled ending time), but it must account for the past, present, and future in some way. Helping members reconnect with their lives without carrying disturbing unfinished business from the group and positively anticipating the next session is no small assignment. Yet, the closing phase is designed to do just that.

The developmental tasks of the closing stage (such as saying good-bye) are activated in this stage. Although closing tends to be brief, it is significant. Left unattended or mishandled, it can seriously jeopardize the therapeutic progress. Structured activities and closing rituals are helpful in handling this phase and some leaders add a feedback or evaluation component to assist them in thinking about and planning future group sessions.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In this section learning activities are organized sequentially with regard to developmental tasks of the group process described in this chapter. Activities have been related to each task or to a group of tasks to exemplify how structured activities can be used to address specific group tasks. However, remember that activities themselves may be utilized flexibly and related to other tasks as well. In addition, keep in mind that other structuring agents (leaders, purposes, members, etc.) may address the tasks without using structured activities.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR SECURITY STAGE

Task S 1. Getting Acquainted

Personality Profile. Pass out a 3 x 5 card and pencil to each group member informing them that this is their "personality profile." Ask members to congregate in the center of the room with their cards and pencils. Explain that they will have to make a series of choices that will reflect the characteristics of their personality. They are to first make their choice by physically moving to one side of the room or the other as traits are identified and then record their choice on the card. Present the following (or other) polarity choices to the group using the directive: "If you are more like ____________ move to the right side of the room, and if you are more like __________, move to the left side of the room."

Ground rules:

a. a choice must be made

b. all choices are final

Polarity samples:

flower—rock
night—day
steak—hamburger
think—feel
anger—hurt
lake—river
spontaneous—deliberate
heart—brain
work—play
mountain—valley
push—pull
thunder—lightning
together—alone
early—late
lead—follow

(use at least 10 varied polarity choices to create a profile of traits)

After the choices have been made have members study their own profiles for a minute or two and then write a personality description on the back of the 3 x 5 card.

Sharing: Have group members share their choices and their interpretations as a way of getting acquainted with each other. (If the group is large, this can be done in sub-groups of 3 to 4). Close the sharing by having each person read their personality statement.

Name Saying. Split the group in half forming two concentric circles facing each other. Using the statement, "My name is ______________________," have the outer circle members rotate around inner circle members introducing themselves to each other. Repeat this rotation four times alternating, having the outer circle move and the inner circle move. Each time, create a different demeanor in presenting the introduction.

Examples: Introduce yourself by expressing the introductory statement:

a. Casually (laid back)

b. Very formally (formal occasion like meeting the President of the United States)

c. Lovingly (like you want to sweep the person off his or her feet)

d. Angrily (like you are angry at the person)

This activity is useful for groups who have never met before and tends to be a tension breaker as well as starting the process of getting to know each other's names.

Task S 2. Interpersonal Warm-up

Balloon Game. Assemble the group in a circle holding hands. Present them with the task of keeping a balloon aloft without letting go of each other's hands and without letting the balloon hit the floor or get away from the group. Once they seem to be mastering the task, add a second, third, and fourth balloon until the group is in chaos. Process the activity in light of group dynamics. This activity not only warms people up, but accentuates the working together dimension of the group and serves as a metaphor for the complications of dealing with the varied concerns of the group members.

Place and Space Activity. As an initiating activity, have group members mill around the room without talking, trying to find a comfortable place in the room in relation to the other members. Allow enough time for members to experiment with different places and spaces. Once the group has formed up in a solidified manner, have members explain how they arrived at their place and space. Re-assemble the group and process the activity in light of group dynamics.

Task S 3. Setting Boundaries

List of Group Rules Activity. Have each group member create a list of rules they think are important/necessary for the group to be effective. Have them place a star by those rules that they believe are a necessity for them to feel at ease in the group. Have members share their lists and personal requirements as a means of addressing the formation of ground rules for the group.

Create Your Own Ground Rules. Present the group with the task of devising a set of ground rules for the group. This activity is best conducted over two sessions where the first produces the basic rules and the second refines, redefines, adds, or deletes rules so that the group has a set of workable guidelines. The rules generated also may be periodically reviewed as a means of evaluating the group atmosphere and keeping the group on target therapeutically.

Task S 4. Building Trust

Anonymity Bag. One of the reasons people keep things inside is because they don't know how people will respond to what they think or feel. Therefore, they choose not to say anything because they would be personally accountable and possibly vulnerable. This activity is designed to provide an anonymity cushion so members can get a sense of how the group will respond to their input without having to directly risk putting themselves on the line.

Have group members write down anonymous statements about what they think and feel and believe about themselves, the group, or someone else in the group. These statements are placed in a bag. The statements can be processed in one of two ways.

> **Leader Processing:** The leader selects a statement from the bag, reads it to the group and facilitates a discussion regarding the statement.
>
> **Member Processing:** The bag is passed around and each member draws out a statement making sure it is not his or her own. In turn, each member reads the statement to the group and gives his or her reaction or opinion as to its meaning and relevance. This process continues until all statements have been discussed.

I Can Hardly Believe It. Using the stimulus statement, "Something I find hard to believe about myself is ____________ ," challenge group members to disclose elements of themselves that (1) they are not really sure are a part of their person and (2) they would not usually risk saying are part of who they are. Create a risk inviting atmosphere by making the activity light, experimental, and fun. Encourage the sharing idea of ideals, fantasies, and exaggerations about themselves that members often toy with in their minds, but tend not to disclose. After sharing, process the information in relation to each person's goals, problems or desires for change.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR ACCEPTANCE STAGE

Task A 1. Personal Sharing

Who Am I Hierarchy. Pass out five 3 x 5 cards to each group member. On each card members are to write a different statement completing the statement, "I am a person who ______ __________ ." Once they have the five cards completed, have them rank order the cards one to five based on the importance of each statement to them as persons. Process the activity in the group by having each member share their statements starting with number five and working up to number one. They are to share the statement and then comment on, "What life would be like if that statement was *not* part of who I am." This activity serves as a means of identifying and appreciating qualities in a person and pinpointing areas that may benefit from work in the group.

5 x 8 Sharing. Pass out 5 x 8 card to each member. Have them draw a diamond in the center of the card and write their name in it. Have them complete the following statements in each of the areas of the card designated by the instructions

Upper left corner:	I am ......
Upper right corner:	I worry about ......
Lower left corner:	I am here because ......
Lower right corner:	By the end of the group I will ......

When the task is completed have group members share their statements either sequentially using one stem at a time or by having each member share their entire card. Process relative to the dynamics and purpose of the group.

Task A 2. Giving Feedback

OTINAY and MIOYI. Introduce this activity by writing one of the above acronyms on the board and explaining that it stands for an ancient oriental ritual that is eminently growth producing. The letters actually stand for one of the following phrases:

"**O**ne **T**hing **I N**oticed **A**bout **Y**ou . . ." and

"**M**y **I**mpression **O**f **Y**ou **I**s . . ."

Using one of these statements, have group members engage in a feedback activity either by designating one person at a time to be the focal point or doing it spontaneously until all members have given and received feedback. These terms sometimes become symbolic and members may ask for feedback or for permission to give feedback by referring to OTINAY or MIOYI at any point in the group process.

Making The Shoe Fit. Have group members remove one of their shoes and place it in a pile in the center of the group. Each member selects a shoe other than their own and puts it on (symbolically). Their task is to explain what they perceive it is like to be the person whose shoe they have on.

A variation of this activity is to have members remove both shoes and exchange them with another group member. This activity called "Walk a mile in my shoes" requires that each person become the person whose shoes they are wearing for a significant amount of time. This activity is very useful as a feedback exercise after the group members have gotten to know each other well and can carry out the other person's role in the group in a realistic manner for a reasonable period of time.

Task A 3. Building Cohesiveness and Closeness

2 Foot Square. This energizer draws attention to the importance of cohesiveness and closeness with respect to working together effectively as a group. Using masking tape or chalk mark out a square on the floor that is smaller than a group can easily fit in (a 2 foot square is an approximate size for a 6-8 person group). Inform the group that their task is to get everyone inside the square with no physical part touching the floor outside the designated area. Tell the group you will not help them in any way, but you will determine if and when they have succeeded. Give the group sufficient time to accomplish the task and the process it in light of the group dynamics involved in completing the task generalizing to the developmental dynamics of the group.

Group Recipe. Have each group member write two ingredients (on separate slips) that they believe they contribute to the group. Place these ingredients in a bag. Process this activity in two steps:

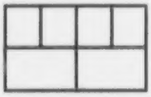
a. Draw out the slips ingredient by ingredient writing them on a chalk board of newsprint. As each ingredient is drawn, the group gives feedback on why that ingredient is important to a group. Optional: The group may also guess by whom the ingredient was supplied as a means of affirming the person who contributed it.

b. When all the ingredients are listed, have the group discuss what the result of their group recipe is.

Members can be asked to write a summary description of the group as a means of initiating discussion or a group summary can be facilitated through discussion.

Task A 4 and A 5. Learning to Accept Self and Others

Attitudes Toward Self and Others Activity. The following activity combines the acceptance of self and others tasks and uses self-disclosure as the interactive mechanism. Pass out an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper and pencil to each group member. Divide the sheet into two columns labeling them "self" and "others". Further divide each column in half creating four quadrants. Finally, divide the upper quadrant of each column into two columns so the sheet of paper looks like this...



In the two columns under "Self" place the stems "I like these things about me..." and "I dislike these things about me..." Have group members list those things they like and dislike about themselves in the respective columns.

In the two columns under "others" write the stems "I am attracted to people when..." and "I am turned off to people when..." Have group members list those things that attract them to people and turn them off to people in their respective columns.

In the bottom quadrant of each column have the group members write two paragraphs. Under the "self" column they are to start the paragraph with "I am a person who..." and use all the information from the "like" and "dislike" lists. Under the "others" column they are to start their paragraphs with "my attitude toward others is..." and use all the information from the "attracted to" and "turned off" lists.

This activity is facilitated timewise if a prepared sheet with the above described design and information is passed out to the group.

When the members have completed their lists and paragraphs, have them share their observations about self and others by reading their paragraphs. Start with the self paragraphs and then move on to the others' paragraphs. Facilitate interaction using their self disclosures to further address the acceptance tasks in the group process.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR RESPONSIBILITY STAGE

Task R 1. Self Assessment

Creating Your Own Birthday Celebration.* One of the ways to teach and experience the task of self-assessment is to provide group members with choices which they have to prioritize according to their own interests, values, and inclinations. Pass out two sheets of 8½ x 11 paper to each person. Fold the two sheets so that each sheet has 12 sections. (Sequence: fold in half then in half again to produce quarters. Fold quarter size into thirds so that when you open the sheets you will have 12 sections). On one sheet number the sections consecutively 1-12 and tear the second sheet into 12 separate sections. Introduce the activity with the following instructions:

> You are going to have a birthday and you must decide what you want to do to celebrate it. I will give you your choices one at a time. Write a key word or phrase on one of your 12 slips and place it on your numbered sheet starting with number one. As each choice is given you may rearrange your choices.

Present the following presents or activities the person could choose for their birthday (key word or phase is in italics)

a. Have someone write a *poem* in honor of your birthday.
b. Receive an *expensive necessity* as a present.
c. Have a number of people give you *precious validations* confirming your importance and worth as an individual.
d. Slips of paper with *personal messages* hidden around the house (one for every year of your life).

---

*This activity was demonstrated by Sydney Simon in a values clarification workshop.

e. Gifts of *socks and underwear* or *panties and pantyhose*
f. *Homemade* gifts.
g. Have your *birthday ignored.*
h. *Cake, ice cream and candles* to celebrate.
i. *Surprise party.*
j. *Coupons:* someone gives you coupons that you can redeem for extra time when you need it.
k. Have a *week-long celebration.*
l. Write your own: have each person write their own idea for how they would celebrate.

When members have completed their prioritizing, have them share and explain their top three or four choices.

This activity can be adapted to any group situation where priorities are involved. Simply construct eleven items that fit the situation and present them one at a time finishing with a "write your own" item. It can be helpful in assessing motivational factors, (why people want to be in a group, part of a program, or picked for a position), identifying problems and planning agendas (what should be addressed first), and identifying key functions or roles that are part of a job description.

Tasks R 2 Through R 5. Responsibility Stage Tasks

One activity can often be designed to address more than one developmental task. In fact, structured activities by their very nature tend to incorporate more than one task. The following example is an activity that addresses all the developmental tasks of the responsibility stage in the context of one structured experience.

Diamond and 4 Activity.

Instructions:

a. Draw a large diamond in the center of an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper.

b. In the diamond, write a brief description of a problem you have been unable to resolve or something you have always wanted to do, but haven't been able to do.

c. On each side of the diamond write a brief description of an obstacle or barrier that has stood in the way of solving your problem or doing what you want to do (identify four barriers or obstacles).

d. Divide the group into sub-groups of at least four members. (If the group is small enough and time allows, the following steps can be completed using the entire group).

e. Processing the material (this is a timed activity).

   1) Member 1: spend one minute describing to the group the problem and the obstacles.

   2) Group members: member one turns his or her back to the group and listens as the group members discuss the problem or situation seeking to identify ways of overcoming the obstacles or barriers (2 minutes).

   3) Member/group interaction: the member and the group discuss the ideas that have been generated relative to the problem (3 minutes).

   4) Repeat the sequence with each member in the group.

   Evidence of the responsibility stage developmental tasks are as follows:

   Instructions a through c: Self-assessment

   Instruction e. 1): Recognizing ownership and giving respect

   Instruction e. 2): Doing a fair share

Instructions a through e. 4): Experiencing and building responsibility

The strength bombardment activity described on p. 136 is another activity that lends itself well to integrating the tasks of the responsibility stage.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR WORK STAGE

Tasks W 1 through W 3.

Reality Therapy Problem Solving. Glasser's (1965) reality therapy approach translates into five basic steps that adopt nicely to the developmental tasks of the work stage. The following steps can be taught to the group and used as an agenda for personal problem solving.

a. What are you doing? The group member describes what he or she is doing in a particular circumstance or relationship and how he or she acts.

b. Is what you are doing helping you? The group member evaluates whether or not what they are doing is resulting in the kind of experience desired. (If yes, stop or start over; if no, go on to Step c.)

c. Can we work out a plan to make your life more successful? Focus group resources on helping the group member develop a plan where the person will successfully resolve his or her problem.

d. Commitment to the plan. Obtain a personal commitment from the group member to carry out the plan.

e. No excuses/No punishment: Hold the person to their commitment, revising the plan if necessary to ensure success. Respect the person's efforts but accept no excuses for not following through on the commitment.

All work stage development tasks are addressed in the context of this activity format. A method of "problem solving" is taught and used by group members. The "we" in the planning step directly "mobilizes group resources" and "reality testing" is built into Step b (evaluation) and Step c (planning) via the criteria of improving one's life and making it more successful.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR CLOSING STAGE

Task C 1. Giving Support

Gift Giving. As a closing activity inform group members they will be exchanging gifts as part of the last group session. Have them think of a gift they would like to give each group member as that person leaves the group and goes on with their life. Gifts may take any shape or form and may be concrete or abstract, but each gift should in some way be related to the work that person had done in the group.

Gifts may be exchanged either spontaneously with members picking individual gifts off their gift list until all gifts have been exchanged or one person at a time may be designated as the "receiver" or "giver" depending on the inclination of the group. Create a festive atmosphere ("just like Christmas") for this activity.

Task C 2. Addressing Unfinished Business

The Unfinished Business Card. A tool to assist group members in addressing "unfinished business" that stems from interaction between individual members in the group is the "unfinished business card". Distribute the card (as depicted in Figure 5.3) to group members several sessions (two or three) prior to the group's designated termination session. Have them place the name of each member in the group member column and a brief description of any unfinished business they believe they have with any member. The contact column refers to the status of the unfinished business as the group closes indicating whether the unfinished business was completed or left incomplete.

The card may be used solely to stimulate group members to think about unfinished business with initiative left to the members as to how to approach it, or specific time can be allocated in the final sessions to deal with the input from the cards. Either way, do not expect that *all* unfinished business between members will be addressed before the group ends.

		Contact			
Group Member	**Unfinished Business**	**Complete**		**Incomplete**	
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

Figure 5.3. Unfinished Business Card.

Task C3. Affirming and Confirming Growth

Rock, Scissors, Paper (adapted). The old game of rock, scissors, paper involves two people who, on the count of three, flash a hand signal: fist for rock, flat hand for paper, and two fingers separated for scissors. The sequence of transcendence is (a) paper covers rock, (b) rock crushes scissors, and (c) scissors cuts paper. The loser always has to pay a price. Using this game, have group members pair off for the purpose of disclosing what they have gained from the group (affirming personal growth) and giving their partner feedback as to how he or she was perceived to grow in the group (confirming growth). The person who loses the game must go first disclosing their own growth or change and receiving feedback, the winner goes second. Rotate partners until each group member has been paired with every other group member. Process the activity as a group focusing on how the group has impacted upon group members' lives.

Task C 4. Saying Good-bye

Annual Signing Party. As a closing activity fashion booklets out of four sheets of 8½ x 11 paper stapled in the center lengthwise and folded in half. Each member is given a booklet and asked to design their own cover representing the group. Have each member place their name on the front of the booklet accompanying their designs. Booklets can then be exchanged for group members to write in reflecting on their view of the person and the group experience. This activity works well if the group is inclined to close with a social (party) atmosphere such as having snacks or pizza or convening in a restaurant or lounge.

Circle For Closure. This activity is specifically designed as a final group experience. Have group members form a circle with arms locked around each other. Ask members to share brief thoughts about the group in either a go-round or spontaneous manner. When completed, have members silently make eye contact with each group member signalling acknowledgement and good-bye non-verbally. When eye contact has been made with each person have members close their eyes. Using guided imagery, verbally instruct the group to visualize the group's history and their own part of it. Have them visualize each group member and think a specific thought about that person. Finally, have them think about themselves and their role in the group.

At this point have the group drop their locked arms position (eyes still closed) and clasp hands. Introduce the idea of closure by informing the group the time has come for the group to end. Have members drop hands to their sides and take an about face. Instruct them to say good-by in their minds to the group. Ask them to think about what is coming up for them in their lives in the next few days or weeks. Have them think specifically about what they will be doing next (after the group). Instruct them to take one step forward (away from the group circle), open their eyes and go about their business.

Task C 5. Follow-Up

A Letter To Myself. This terminating activity can be used to extend the impact of the group and serves to remind group members about changes they have made or plans they intend to carry out. During the last session of the group have members write letters to themselves in which they state where they would like to be with regard to their goals or problems at some future date (one month hence or six months, and so on). Then have group members exchange letters and addresses and agree on a date when they will be sent. Variations of this activity could involve phone calls, personal contacts, or a reconvening of the group. The group leader also can serve as the sender if that is more convenient or a more certain method of getting the letters sent out.

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Chapter 6

GROUP LEADER

The objective of this chapter is to describe and delineate the qualities, skills, and functions of effective group leaders. The inherent difficulty in this task is related to the wide variety of characteristics that can be attributed to effective leadership. This variability is the result of differences in leader personalities as well as divergent training programs, philosophies, and theories. The diversity in member personalities and the varied purposes for which groups are formed also must be considered in discussing successful leadership. Therefore any effort to describe "the perfect leader" would be a useless academic exercise and have little relevance because of its nearsightedness. On the other hand describing basic tendencies that seem to have commonality among effective leaders and discussing a broad range of leadership traits, skills, functions, and issues seems to be a more plausible manner of accomplishing the stated objective of this chapter. In this way the prospective leader can assess the information in light of her or his own personality and theoretical convictions.

This chapter includes such topics as the personality of the group counselor, training for group leadership, leader skills and functions, basic issues in group leadership, and special considerations for the group leader. It will include suggested activities for obtaining the leadership experience that is so imperative in developing expertise in group counseling and concludes with learning activities that focus on leadership dynamics and characteristics.

PERSONALITY OF THE GROUP LEADER

In any treatise on effective therapeutic intervention, whether in the form of psychiatry, psychotherapy, or counseling with individuals or in groups, the one overriding characteristic that is discussed repeatedly is the personality of the individual who is cast in the helping role. This is only logical since the service performed is basically a human service and therefore remains just out of reach of empirical and laboratory controls that could mechanize the process. Although this is true it raises some difficult problems in distinguishing "who" the most effective helpers are and "what" qualities describe them. This same problem confronts leaders and trainers in group counseling/therapy.

The professional literature is replete with articles and books that stress personal characteristics as the most important aspect of a counselor's ability to counsel (Mahler, 1969). Since each individual is unique, he or she brings to the helping role his or her own particular capacities and incapacities that enhance or deter the helping process. To know which traits are assets and which are liabilities the counselor must engage in an introspective process to attain the knowledge that will help him or her decide which qualities to use and which to circumvent. Therefore the first characteristic of an effective leader is ***self-awareness.*** Self-awareness or self-knowledge is the very personal education that enables us as persons and leaders "to listen to almost anything without losing our temper or our self-confidence" (Robert Frost).

Self-awareness is important because the group leader influences the nature of the group. How the leader acts determines to a great extent how the group will respond. Leaders must know what qualities about themselves make them attractive to the group. They must know how they influence others and how others affect them. Mahler (1969) pointed out that awareness of one's self and one's personality must involve "knowing strengths, weaknesses, conflict areas, motivations and needs" (p.170). Without this knowledge leaders not only open themselves up for potential problems in the group but also jeopardize their effectiveness in utilizing their own personal resources in directing the group.

Dustin and George (1973) stated that leaders' self-awareness must include a thorough knowledge of their own rewards in relating to others. Without knowing what personal attributes reinforce other people, the leader cannot be effective in helping members modify and change their behavior. Lakin (1969) went a step farther and stressed that group leaders must be clear about their own intentions and goals. Lack of such understanding can result in damaging indecisiveness on the leader's part. It can also subject the group to unnecessary pressure and lead to the use of unethical practices under the guise of leadership expertise.

The counselor's ***attitudes*** also are important components of self-awareness. They will eventually become apparent to group members in any event, therefore counselors need to have a firm grasp on their value structure and attitudes so that they can be as transparent to the group as possible. This enables them to interact with members more freely. One value of special import to the leader is that of valuing self-awareness since the whole group counseling process centers around self-disclosure and feedback, which is designed to promote the members' self-knowledge and to help them use this knowledge to solve their problems. Leaders who do not value self-knowledge for themselves can hardly expect group members to see it as important in their lives.

Leader ***personality*** is the core of leadership style, and if leaders do not know of what that core consists, they have nothing on which to build their approach nor can they authenticate their style. During the beginning stages of the group process personality characteristics of the leader determine how quickly rapport is established. As the group develops the counselor's personality is the factor that defines the ultimate limits of the group experience because anything considered is contingent on the value system of the leader. In fact when problems or impasses arise in the group a good rule of thumb is for leaders to first look at themselves before trying to determine if the causes come from sources in the group. Substantial self-knowledge is thus mandatory as a leader personality trait in successful group leadership.

Openness and flexibility are two personality characteristics that lend themselves well to effective group leadership. There is a direct positive correlation between the possession of these two qualities and the range of people with whom the counselor can effectively work. This is not to imply that counselors who set no limits and make no demands are the most effective. Rather, these qualities help the leader develop limits appropriate to the nature of clients and their problems. ***Openness*** is that quality which stems from a secure knowledge of one's self so that the ideas of others can be received without feeling personal threat. Leaders, because of their own self-knowledge, can open themselves to the exposés of their clients without using judgment as a protective device. Instead they communicate an "appreciation of diversity" which Hulse (1985) considered an essential attribute of effective group leaders. Clients experience this openness in the form of acceptance, which paves the way for further self-disclosure on their part.

Flexibility is an outgrowth of the leader's confidence and sensitivity to the needs of the clients. The less confidence leaders have in themselves the more rigid they tend to become. Dogmatic nonstructuring by a leader is an example of high rigidity rather than the ultimate in flexibility. Flexible people know their own limits but are willing to vary within those limits and are continually testing the limits to reaffirm their whereabouts. One error that group leaders often make is that they go through the limit-testing process once and define for themselves what the extremities of their effectiveness are and then never test them again. This is a sure way to stifle growth because, as one's experience increases, ***self-confidence*** increases, and with added self-confidence flexibility increases. However, if counselors lapse into rigid patterns of operation they will never realize the gain in flexibility.

Allied closely with openness and flexibility is ***tolerance of ambiguity.*** This term is often narrowly construed as the ability to keep quiet in silent periods. Although at times this is indeed an example of being tolerant of ambiguous circumstances, it is a shallow test in most cases because silence can be more a matter of resistance than constructive or therapeutic action. A more viable definition for the group counselor is the ability to act constructively in the interest of the group in the absence of knowledge about what is in the minds of group members. This may take the form of being silent, allowing the pressure of silence to produce meaningful disclosures by sharing. In any event the most effective leaders have personalities that can carry them through new and ambiguous situations without imposing their will on others simply to alleviate their own discomfort.

Effective group counselors are essentially ***positive*** individuals. People who think positively about life tend to have a constructive influence on those around them. The positive person is also in a good position to see strengths in others, which is an important asset in group counseling because clients steeped in their own problems sometimes fail to see the positive aspects of their lives. There must be a diplomatic aspect to the leader's positivity, however, in order to make the best use of it as a resource. Members can be turned off by a "look at the good side" routine, and therefore the positive perspective must be tempered with a sensitivity to the negative side of things so the clients are assured that their perspectives are valued also.

A number of leader personality traits can be grouped under the general heading of ***"human qualities."*** These characteristics tend to give others good feelings about themselves and help in developing therapeutic relationships. They can be described as social interest traits, and they give the counselor a good rapport with people. ***A genuine and sincere interest in others*** is one of these qualities. People who find other people interesting, intriguing, and exciting and can convey that enthusiasm in a nonthreatening manner make good group counselors. This is especially true if that interest can be attached to the specific individual in the group as well as to the group as a whole. This interest, coupled with a ***sensitivity to others*** that allows the counselor to put them and their interests and problems first, is a potent force in a group setting. Some people have a natural ***empathic ear*** and others have to develop it, but the counselor who can tune in to the lives of others without disturbing or possessing them has the capability of being especially effective in group counseling.

Warmth and ***caring*** are also human qualities that effective group leaders tend to have. The beautiful thing about these qualities is that they can be conveyed in innumerable ways.

Some people do it by their effervescence and enthusiasm, others by their smiles or actions, and others use their seriousness or quietness to show their depth of concern. The means of expression is not limited to one way, and if these traits are present, usually no confusion exists on the part of the message receiver. Being a caring person is a must for group counselors. It provides them with the necessary fortitude to deal with people who have problems. It gives them leverage in the group interaction because of its importance to group members. It provides a model for others to follow, and it lays the groundwork for strong mutual liking and respect in the group which is essential to success.

Birnbaum (1969) cited ***human objectivity*** as a necessary quality for persons engaged in the helping professions. This characteristic allows the counselor to be involved with others but at the same time be apart from them in order to assess things more rationally and objectively. It might be equated with the "as if" quality in Rogers' (1962) definition of empathy: the counselor becomes involved in another's life as if actually being that person without losing personal identity and perspective in the process. People who are able to think clearly when emotionally involved and under pressure tend to function well as group leaders. People who can be receptive to others, who can function in accord with their own values, and who have their own opinions make good group leaders.

Finally, effective group counselors are ***mature*** and ***integrated*** persons who identify with the struggles involved in the process of life and can appreciate the efforts of members who are working on problems. They are able and willing to share themselves if necessary and in the best interest of the group. They are not devoid of problems and concerns in their own lives but are able to put them into proper perspective while working with group members. They have ***integrity,*** which carries them through their own personal struggles and facilitates their handling of problems in the group process. They are strong enough not to wield their power to direct and badger members and strong enough to admit their own weaknesses. They are true to themselves, their clients, and their professional responsibility. Effective group leaders are people who can deal successfully with life's tasks and who are able to function interdependently with others. They are active and growing human beings who are continually striving for self-actualization without depriving others of opportunities to do the same.

The personality characteristics described here may not be definitive, but they do provide a strong basis for effective leadership when combined with the unique therapeutic qualities of individuals and the philosophical, theoretical, and technical factors provided by training. Many individuals display these qualities naturally but still may not know how to use them effectively in group counseling. Training, which is the topic of the next section, is the means whereby personality characteristics are translated into leadership skills that enhance the group counseling process.

TRAINING GROUP COUNSELORS

Basic Requirements

Effective group leadership is predicated upon the following prerequisites acquired through training:

1. experience as a member in groups where intrapersonal and interpersonal problems are confronted on a personal basis;
2. cognitive knowledge relative to the theory and dynamics of group counseling specifically including a developmental group process perspective;
3. skills, techniques, and methods that can be used in leading groups; and
4. supervised experience as a group leader.

To assist training programs in preparing group workers and holding them accountable for quality preparation, the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) developed Professional Standards for Group Counseling (See Figure 6.1). These standards define group counseling and designate the knowledge and practice competencies and the experience base considered minimal for competent performance of leaders at the entry level in group work. An effective training program in group work will provide these prerequisites and designated

(Continued on page 192)

ASGW PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR GROUP COUNSELING

PREAMBLE

Whereas counselors may be able to function effectively with individual clients, they are also required to possess specialized knowledge and skills that render them effective in group counseling. The Association for Specialists in Group Work supports the preparation of group practitioners as part of and in addition to counselor education. The Professional Standards for Group Counseling represent the minimum core of group leader (cognitive and applied) competencies that have been identified by the Association for Specialists in Group Work.

DEFINITION OF GROUP COUNSELING

Consists of the interpersonal processes and activities focused on conscious thoughts and behavior performed by individuals who have the professional credentials to work with and counsel groups of individuals regarding career, educational, personal, social and developmentally related concerns, issues, tasks or problems.

DESIGNATED GROUP COUNSELING AREAS

In order to work as a professional in group counseling, an individual must meet and demonstrate minimum competencies in the generic core of group counseling standards. These are applicable to all training programs regardless of level of work or specialty area. In addition to the generic core competencies, (and in order to practice in a specific area of expertise) the individual will be required to meet one or more specialty area standards (school counseling and guidance, student personnel services in higher education, or community/mental health agency counseling).

Figure 6.1. ASGW Professional Standards for Group Counseling.

Approved by the ASGW Executive Board, March 20, 1983.

Source: Association for Specialists in Group Work, Alexandria VA: Author, 1983. Reproduced by permission.

Figure 6.1. Continued.

GROUP COUNSELOR KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

The qualified group leader has demonstrated specialized knowledge in the following aspects of group work:

1. Be able to state for at least three major theoretical approaches to group counseling the distinguishing characteristics of each and the commonalities shared by all.

2. Basic principles of group dynamics and the therapeutic ingredients of groups.

3. Personal characteristics of group leaders that have an impact on members; knowledge of personal strengths, weaknesses, biases, values and their impact on others.

4. Specific ethical problems and considerations unique to group counseling.

5. Body of research on group counseling in one's specialty area (school counseling, college student personnel, or community/mental health agency).

6. Major modes of group work, differentiation among the modes, and the appropriate instances in which each is used (such as group guidance, group counseling, group therapy, human relations training, etc.).

7. Process components involved in typical stages of a group's development (i.e., characteristics of group interaction and counselor roles).

8. Major facilitative and debilitative roles that group members may take.

9. Advantanges and disadvantages of group counseling and the circumstances for which it is indicated or contraindicated.

Figure 6.1. Continued.

GROUP COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES

The qualified group leader has shown the following abilities:

1. To screen and assess readiness levels of prospective clients.
2. To deliver a clear, concise, and complete definition of group counseling.
3. To recognize self-defeating behaviors of group members.
4. To describe and conduct a personally selected group counseling model appropriate to the age and clientele of group leader's speciality area(s).
5. To identify accurately nonverbal behavior among group members.
6. To exhibit appropriate pacing skills involved in stages of a group's development.
7. To identify and intervene effectively at critical incidents in the group process.
8. To work appropriately with disruptive group members.
9. To make use of the major strategies, techniques, and procedures of group counseling.
10. To provide and use procedures to assist transfer and support of changes by group members in the natural environment.
11. To use adjunct group structures such as psychological homework (i.e., self-monitoring, contracting).
12. To use basic group leader interventions such as process comments, empathic responses, self-disclosures, confrontations, etc.
13. To facilitate therapeutic conditions and forces in group counseling.
14. To work cooperatively and effectively with a co-leader.
15. To open and close sessions, and terminate the group process.
16. To provide follow-up procedures to assist maintenance and support of group members.
17. To utilize assessment procedures in evaluating effects and contributions of group counseling.

Figure 6.1. Continued.

Table 1 Training in Clinical Practice

Type of Supervised Experience	**Minimum Number of [clock] Hours Required: Master's or Entry Level Program**
1. Critique of group tapes (by self or others)	5
2. Observing group counseling (live or media presentation)	5
3. Participating as a member in a group	15
4. Leading a group with a partner and receiving critical feedback from a supervisor	15
5. Practicum: Leading a group alone, with critical self-analysis of performance; supervisor feedback on tape; and self-analysis	15
6. Fieldwork or Internship: Practice as a group leader with on-the-job supervision	25

competencies. However, the training of group leaders in master's level graduate programs—the programs that produce the majority of group practitioners in professional settings—is still often relegated to one or at most two required courses in group dynamics and process and sporadic attention in practicums or internships.

Carroll (1985), Shapiro and Shapiro (1985) and Conyne et al. (1985) all specified insufficient and inadequate training of group leaders as a major critical issue for group work. Even Yalom (1985) noted that without constant and continual attention to training, group counseling, and group therapy naturally inclines toward a second rate status as a helping modality. Consequently, even with the maturation of group work as a full fledged professional entity, it appears that we are continuing to turn out personnel who have a head knowledge of and emotional commitment to groups but who are lacking in the technical skills and experience to implement a group program on the job. Thus, the process that for years has been acclaimed as a potential means of solidifying and promoting the counselor role still receives but scant emphasis in comparison to its supposed impact. In addition, the underlying assumption that if counselors are competent in individual counseling they will also be proficient in groups still lurks in the minds of some trainers.

Mahler (1969) pointed out the fallacy of this assumption, arguing that the reverse is much more likely to be the case—a person who is effective in group probably also would do well in individual counseling. Pearson (1981) noted that group skills tend to be viewed as extensions of one-to-one skills with the focus being on similarities rather than group skills being construed as over and above basic individual counseling skills. The need then is for delimited programs, i.e., master's programs with highly structured degree and certification requirements and of short duration, to reorient emphasis to the group focus and away from the clinical and individual orientation that predominates if competent group leaders are to be prepared.

Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) affirmed this stance stressing that the skill of utilizing group process must become the primary emphasis of training counselors. This is important according to their purview because counselors place their skills at the disposal of a vast range of clientele and significant others in their clients' lives. Without adequate group counseling, counselors' direct and indirect service functions are severely curtailed because they have neither the time nor the tools to meet the needs of these people individually.

Lakin (1969) profferred a somber perspective and warning. If proper attention is not given to training effective leaders while promoting the group process as a viable means of helping people, we risk having "vast numbers of inadequate [leaders] who practice their newly discoverd insights on others in the naive conviction that they have all but mastered the skills involved" (p. 927). Thus we may have to face charges of incompetence leveled at group leaders who were inadequately trained and lack the skills to function effectively in group settings. And, as was pointed out in Chapter 2, the group has unique characteristics that require knowledge and experience to handle appropriately, so the need is clearly obvious. But what should that training entail?

General consensus is that training of group leaders should encompass both the cognitive and the experiential domains. Poppen and Thompson (1974) concluded that the group leader must have knowledge in a minimum of three areas: group-counseling philosophy, group member behavior, and group-leader behavior. Ohlsen (1970) stated that minimum preparation should include a "thorough knowledge of group dynamics, of the forces that influence behavior within a group, and of group-counseling techniques" (p. 145) plus a group-counseling practicum. Bonney (1969) felt that the group counselor needs to have "knowledge of the basic principles of counseling and the effective use of them, and thorough understanding of the dynamics of cohesive groups and the skillful management of them" (p. 161). Shapiro and Shapiro (1985) identified five core elements of training:

1. personal experience as a group leader;
2. observation of professional leaders;
3. theory, process, and skills training;
4. supervised practice as a group leader; and
5. personal (group) therapy.

Blaker and Samo (1973) added that the group leader needs at least one specific course in group psychology and must have a sense of responsibility to the group members. They stressed the importance of leaders being motivated to continue learning after formal training is completed, through workshops and other varied group programs. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) also stressed the need for continual development of group-leadership ability:

> As a counselor develops his leadership skills and self-awareness, he will want to do more reading to determine which approaches are congruent with his personal lifestyle. One's theory and practice of group work should evolve from wide reading, the development of an understanding of how his personality influences his personal theory preference, and opportunities to observe varied styles of leadership. (p. 68)

The experiential components of leadership training usually include group-membership experiences, co-leadership ventures, and eventually supervised training as the leader of different types of groups in a practicum or field setting. Yalom (1985) pinpointed four specific experience components that should comprise a prospective group leader's preparation:

1. observation of experienced group clinicians in action,
2. formal supervision of initial group leadership experiences by qualified group supervisors,
3. a personal group experience, and
4. personal counseling or psychotherapy.

The evidence cited points to three specific areas of emphasis in the training and development of competent group leaders. The first is the vast body of knowledge associated with the group as an entity in and of itself. The second is concentrated involvement in groups—as members and leaders—to integrate knowledge and practice and to develop a conceptualized framework for working with groups. And the third is professional commitment to continually update the knowledge and skills concomitant with the practical experience on the job. In line with these three areas of concentration the following guidelines are offered as aids in developing a realistic and practical program that will be more than adequate in preparing counselors to work in groups.

General Coursework. These courses should form the foundation for group-counselor training, as well as providing supplemental knowledge about the group process. The basic requirement of most counselor education programs can supply the foundational aspect, and courses drawn from psychology, sociology, and human relations can provide the supplemental. Preference should be given to courses that use group-process methods as part of their format.

Group Coursework. Every group counselor should have the equivalent of two courses in group work, one which emphasizes group dynamics and process and one which involves theories, techniques, and procedures. These courses should be taken in the department that is most closely allied to the setting in which the counselor wishes to work. Although it might be advantageous to have more group course work, most programs do not have the resources or flexibility to provide them. Besides, once the basic coursework is taken, preference should be given to the experiential domain rather than the academic.

Membership Experience. Every group counselor should be required to participate in at least one intensive, *ongoing* group-counseling experience. The ongoing nature of the experience is stressed to ensure that synthesis of the cognitive and experiential learning processes takes place over time and has more opportunity to develop. One-shot marathons or short-term group experiences can certainly provide supplementary data but can't substitute for the extended process of the typical counseling group.

Practicum Group Experience. Specific requirements to engage in a variety of groups should be a part of the general practicum for counselor trainees. Minimally the practicum student should conduct an ongoing counseling group, and a series of group guidance and classroom meetings (in schools) or a series of structured preventive mental health groups (in agencies), in addition to the usual one-to-one counseling and other requirements. These experiences give potential group leaders the opportunity to develop expertise in groups on an equal footing with individual counseling.

Formal Group Practicum. This requirement needs to be added in most training programs. A specific field experience concentrating entirely on the development of the counselor's group-leadership ability in a preferred setting is a necessity. Supervision should concentrate on the development of personal qualities and competence of the leader and provide technical skills for organizing and conducting group programs.

On-the-Job Leadership Experience. No substitute exists for experience and once counselors have completed their training and are out on the job, they should proceed immediately without delay in getting groups started. Many counselors never use their training in group counseling because they never get started—some reason not to always exists and plenty of other things can be found to do. Carroll (1985) has observed that systemic expectations of counselor role in schools often undermine implementation of group programs by school counselors, and Yalom (1985) cited the old nemeses of groups being "second rate," "superficial or dangerous," and only useful if individual counseling is not available as factors that impede group work (p. 515). Nevertheless, group counselors must take the initiative, set and stick with priorities and place groups at the head of the list.

Personal Reading. The professional journals are continually adding to the information in the field of group work, and group leaders should make every effort to keep themselves current. Two recommended journals that have stood the tests of time and relevance as to group work are the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* and the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. New books and materials are also reviewed in these journals periodically, so there is no excuse for not keeping abreast of new ideas in the group domain. The very fact that the last twenty years have witnessed vast and penetrating changes in the area of group counseling should be reason enough to stay well read.

Professional Organizations, Workshops, and Meetings. Membership in professional organizations such as the

Association for Specialists in Group Work (A division of the American Association for Counseling and Development) and/or the American Group Psychotherapy Association is imperative. Such membership provides plenty of opportunities to participate in or observe group programs at professional meetings, in workshops, and in inservice situations. Counselors who lead groups should make a concentrated effort to attend these sessions and to contribute to them as well. Sharing experience is an excellent way to develop new ideas and get feedback on your own.

If prospective group leaders can acquire training and experience in each of these categories, they will have a substantial basis on which to build an effective group-leadership style that will be personally satisfying and will contribute meaningfully to the lives of the group members with whom they work.

Specialized Training

Specialized training in the specific areas will accentuate effectiveness and provide invaluable resources in leading counseling and therapy groups.

Assertiveness Training. Many client problems revolve around the issue of assertiveness. Realizing the need for and learning appropriate assertive behavior skills is one way of assisting group members in their relational dilemmas. Most assertiveness training programs utilize group process. For example, Lange and Jakubowski (1976) presented extensive structured exercises and illustrations depicting cognitive, affective and behavioral procedures for increasing group members' responsible assertiveness. Alberti (1977) and Alberti and Emmons (1978) also are helpful resources with respect to assertiveness.

Interpersonal Skills Training. Training in this area includes a wide range of skills encompassing communication, relationship development, self-awareness, social skills, and interpersonal problem solving. Interpersonal skills are the links that connect the individual and other people and determine the quality and satisfaction of our relationships. A major portion of those links involve communication. Satir (1972) wrote that "once a human being has arrived on this earth, communication is the single largest factor determining what kinds of relationships he makes with others and what happens to him in the world about him" (p. 30). Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman (1975) added that communication is both a vehicle for creating relationships and an index of relationships" (p. 279). Consequently knowing how to assist group members in acquiring interpersonal skills is vital. In fact, Yalom (1985) pointed out that socializing techniques are a curative factor which operate in all helping groups.

Several excellent sources for content and techniques in this area are Johnson (1981), Hamachek (1978), Miller et al. (1975), Satir (1972), Tubbs and Moss (1978), and Platt and Spivak (1976).

Social Learning Techniques and Behavior Modification. A wide range of methods and techniques based on social learning theory and behavioral principles are applicable to personal problem solving. Techniques that stress imitative, cognitive, emotional, or operant learning all provide helpful tools to the group leader. Helpful resources in this area are Agras (1978), Bandura (1969), Krumboltz and Thoreson (1976), and Kanfer and Goldstein (1975).

Marital and Family Processes and Dynamics. Many of the interpersonal concerns members bring to group emanate from their family relationships. Yalom (1970) even went so far as to say that "without exception patients enter group therapy with a history of highly unsatisfactory experience in their first and most important group—their primary family" (p. 12). Satir (1972) stated simply that "troubled families make troubled people" (p. 18). Siegelman (1983) said that the greatest interpersonal risks are related to marriage, separation, and divorce, confronting family members and raising children. It stands to reason then that extensive knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of marital and family relations is vital in group counseling. A background in family systems theory related to nuclear and extended family interaction, understanding family constellation and ordinal position and a myriad of other concepts drawn from marriage and family therapy would be useful. More attention will be given to this area in Chapter 12 in which we will focus on family theory as a group resource.

Conflict Resolution. Conflict in relationships is inevitable and often surfaces as the focus of attention in counseling groups. Johnson (1981) pointed out that "an interpersonal conflict exists whenever an action by one person prevents, obstructs, or interferes with the actions of another person" (p. 195). Effective conflict resolution, therefore, is often the key to not only solving the presenting problem but future problems as well. [Chapter 9 in Johnson (1981) is an excellent chapter on resolving interpersonal conflicts.] Developing your expertise in teaching conflict resolution strategies is another valuable asset to the group leader.

Values Clarification. Many interpersonal difficulties stem from a lack of understanding of one's values or values conflicts. Knowing values clarification strategies and techniques will prove valuable in group counseling. Helpful sources include Kirschenbaum (1977); Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966); Harmin, Kirschenbaum, and Simon (1973); and Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1972).

Training and expertise in these and other similar areas will enhance leader effectiveness as well as help anticipate the types of problems that will arise in counseling groups.

GROUP LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The function of training should be to help group practitioners develop the interpersonal skills that translate personality and theoretical factors into practical tools for use in group counseling. These designated leadership skills certainly are not an exhaustive list but they are representative of the wide range of skills recognized as valuable to group leaders. Pearson (1981) has divided leadership skills into the two basic categories of teaching skills and group management skills. Teaching skills include explicit teaching, implicit teaching, and process observation. Group management skills include convening, eliciting, channeling, limit-setting, and protection.

Jacobs, Harvill, and Masson (1988) have identified twelve (12) basic skills for groups leaders (See Chapter 5), and Corey and Corey (1977) described fifteen (15). For our purpose group leadership skills will be discussed under the three major categories of reaction skills, interaction skills, and action skills.

Reaction skills are responsive in nature, and they aid the leader in being receptive to individuals and the group as a whole. ***Interaction skills*** serve a mediating function in the group. They provide the leader the wherewithal to control and guide the group interaction, and they facilitate therapeutic impact. ***Action skills*** as their title implies are vehicles that the leader can use to take an active part in promoting and directing the group process. They serve to increase the depth of group interaction and provide the means whereby leaders can assert their expertise for the good of certain individuals or the group. The specific skills in each of these categories are listed and briefly described in this section.

Reaction Skills

Listening. The skill of listening is the most important skill a group leader can develop. Listening is all too frequently taken for granted as a natural part of the communication process that occurs automatically. That assumption is exactly where the problem lies. Because of the emphasis on and need for verbal expression in most areas of our lives, we work very hard at developing our expressive abilities but do very little to improve our receptive abilities. Group leaders must develop their potential as listeners to ensure understanding of the members, their problems, and their communication in the group. The listening skill must be active and not passive in nature; its influence is only useful if counselors can put into words what they are hearing so that all can benefit from their understanding. In other words, what is received in the private domain of the counselor's person must be returned to the public domain of the group for best results.

Group leaders who listen actively communicate four very important therapeutic qualities to the members of the group. They communicate acceptance, because they are willing to hear what clients have to say in a responsive manner rather than in a judgmental manner. They communicate respect by giving members the opportunity to express how they see things without demeaning them or their perceptions. They communicate empathic understanding through the process of returning to the client what they understand the client's words to mean. And they communicate caring because of their interest in the member's point of view. All the other skills discussed in this category are really subskills of active listening. When combined they communicate all four of these qualities in a manner that accentuates the helping process.

Restatement. Restatement is the skill of repeating the basic content of a member's communication using much the same language and syntax. Its main purpose is to convey to the speakers that they are being heard and that the leader is with them at the moment and following attentively in their discussion. This skill is relatively easy to develop but can become sterile if overused. It is mainly effective in the beginning stages of communication and loses some of its utility as the depth of conversation increases.

Member: I have to make a decision about college right away because my parents are getting impatient.

Leader: You must decide about college soon because your parents are losing their patience with you.

Reflection. Reflection is the skill of expressing the meaning of the members' communications, indicating that they are not only heard but understood. Reflections can focus on the content of the communication or on the feelings that constitute the member's affective stance in regard to the communication. Reflection is useful because it helps the leader tune in to the internal frame of reference of the group member and because it helps members express what they might not have been able to express under other circumstances.

Reflection is a very complex skill because it encompasses both verbal and nonverbal communication and in its most sensitive form can penetrate to the very core of the client's being. As such it is also a potentially threatening mechanism that can frighten members if it's not adjusted to the level at which they are operating. Moving too quickly or too deeply in a reflective manner can create the impression that the leader is seeing right through the person. This can interfere with the group's progress and create a barrier between the members and the leader.

Member: I have to make a decision about college right away because my parents are getting impatient.

Leader: It sounds like you are feeling a lot of pressure from your parents about college but that you are still not sure what you want to do.

Clarifying. Clarifying is the skill of improving communication by responding to confusing and unclear aspects of a message in order to better understand it. Sometimes simply asking the member to say it again removes difficulties and clarifies the communication. At other times the leader may have to help members find the words necessary to relate their meaning. Clarification is used to consolidate and accentuate the key components of the speaker's statement so that the whole group is mutually cognizant of them.

Member: I'm experiencing so much failure lately that I'm beginning to think there is no hope at all for me to be happy. My grades are all Ds, I flunked my driver's test, and my parents are breaking up. I guess I'll just have to roll with the punches.

Leader: Could you explain that to the group again. At the beginning it sounded like you had no hope but at the end you sounded more positive.

Summarizing. Summarizing is the skill of pulling together the important elements of a particular conversation or a group session and presenting them in capsule form. Often summaries are offered in a concluding manner, but they also are useful for transitional purposes to stimulate further reactions on the part of the group members. However used, the tying-together aspect of a summary is a very useful learning experience for members.

Leader: Our discussion so far seems to have centered on our difficulties in relating to teachers who have old-fashioned ideas. It seems some of you like them because you always know what's expected but that the rest of you feel they are not with it and they're poor teachers. It also seems like the problems you mentioned are those teachers' responsibility, and I'm wondering what part if any you play in the problems.

Interaction Skills

Moderating. Moderating is a regulatory skill used by a leader to govern the group interaction, ensuring that all opinions are aired, and to maintain a mode of discussion that's fair to all members. It requires a certain objectivity on the part of the leader to perform so as not to be viewed as biased by members.

Leader: There seem to be two sides of this issue in our group. We just heard from those who are against any curfew. Now what about those of you who see a curfew as a positive thing.

Interpreting. Interpreting is the skill of relating material and feelings being discussed to an external criterion as a frame of reference to help members gain insight and understanding. In most cases the frame of reference is not cognizant to members and requires the leader's expertise to relate it to the situation being discussed. Group interpretations—interpretations that focus on the functioning of the group rather than on an individual in the group—help the group readjust communication patterns in a manner beneficial to therapeutic growth.

Leader: The group is jumping from topic to topic and person to person so quickly today that it's difficult to follow. We might be using this scatter-gun approach to avoid getting personal because we really don't trust each other.

Linking. Linking is the skill of tying together common elements in the communication of individual members to help them identify more closely with one another. It is a very useful tool in developing cohesiveness in the group. Linking also is used to pinpoint subgroups who have different perceptions on the same issue.

Leader: Bill and Cheryl seem to think alike on the idea that dating should be done in groups, while Mary and Frank seem to favor the individual-couples approach.

Blocking. Blocking is the skill of stepping in to prevent the execution of an undesirable, unethical, or inappropriate action by the group or some of its members. This skill requires leaders to use their knowledge of the group process as well as their sensitivity to the group to interfere with group actions that would be detrimental to the members. It is imperative that the leader using this skill be warm but firm and not influenced by the emotional climate that may prevail in the group at the moment.

Member: Betty has missed one group session, has been late to the other two, and isn't here today. I don't think she cares about our group at all and that we should just boot her out.

Members: (Chorus of "I agree")

Leader: I'm not sure why Betty has acted the way she has, but I think you should bring this up to her in the group. You can't just eliminate her without hearing her side of it.

Supporting. Supporting is the skill of providing reinforcement, encouragement, and backing to group members in their efforts to interact in the group. It is most useful when members are disclosing difficult personal information or giving emotionally tinted feedback. It also is useful for drawing out quiet members and aiding shy individuals to express themselves. The giving of support also implies that it can be withdrawn and therefore it can be used as a means of modifying members' behavior in both a positive and negative sense.

Member: I guess what I have really been wanting to say but couldn't is that I would like the group's help in overcoming my shyness in relating to people.

Leader: John, you showed a lot of courage in sharing that, and maybe you have just taken an important first step in overcoming your fear of other people.

Limiting. Limiting is the skill of defining boundaries to give structure to the group. It provides the framework within which the group can interact and prevents excesses and deviations that will infringe on the rights of members or result in irresponsible actions in the group. It cuts two ways at once because it curtails harmful interaction from occurring while at the same time denoting guidelines for therapeutic interaction.

> **Leader:** It's in the best interest of the group and of each of the members if we don't discuss with others what we talk about in here. That way we won't run into problems like gossiping or breaking confidences.

Protecting. Protecting is the skill of preventing individual members from being unduly criticized, scapegoated, or hurt in a nontherapeutic manner. This skill is essential in combating the overwhelming force of group pressure, which can become a problem at times. In most cases it's necessary to defend single members from the onslaught of the group, but sometimes it's also necessary to protect sub-groups of members who are being treated unfairly or inappropriately. This skill demands the ultimate in sensitivity because the leader must be aware of the individual member's limits and ploys, the group's intentions, the possibility of protection coming from within the group, and personal responsibility for making the decision to protect.

> **Leader:** It seems like everyone in the group has had something to say about Joanna, but no one has mentioned anything positive. I feel she has held up very well under all that pressure, but now I think maybe we should look at the group's behavior for a while to find out what is happening to make us so negative.

Consensus Taking. Consensus taking is the skill of finding out where members stand in their perceptions of the various topics and problems that are being considered in the group. Of particular importance is to tap all divergencies of opinion in the group so that members clearly understand where they are in relation to each other. This skill is useful when topics of high emotional content are discussed and the conversation becomes heated and difficult to follow. It settles the group down and clears the air, making it possible to proceed with both better understanding and less affective interference.

> Leader: We have been hard at it for the last 15 minutes about how much commitment we really have to this group and it has been heavy but a little difficult to come to grips with. Maybe we could do a go-around where each one of you speaks only for yourself, giving your own feeling of commitment. Bill, would you start it off?

Action Skills

Questioning. Questioning, according to Benjamin (1969), is another of those natural tendencies that needs to be refined and developed before it has a positive impact on the helping process. Our automatic reliance on the question is a dependency that must be overcome if we are to be effective in groups. If we don't develop alternatives and vary the nature of our questioning we not only limit the effectiveness of the helping process but also model less effective questioning styles for group members to use in their interaction with each other. The negative effect is cumulative. With these reservations, the skill of questioning is still an important and highly relied on vehicle in the group process. Questions can be used to help group members consider aspects of themselves and their concerns they haven't thought of. Questions also can serve to transfer ambiguous silences into productive discussion. The types of questions used should always open the door for further discussion. "Yes/no" questions create unbalanced conversation patterns and seldom result in spontaneous discussion.

Member: I'm afraid my parents no longer trust me and that there's nothing I can do that will change their minds.

Leader: It sound like you feel you might have violated their trust to a point where it's irreparable. But you seem to know what they do expect. Could you tell us what you think their standards of trust are for you?

Probing. Probing is the skill of helping group members go more deeply into themselves and their problems under the direction of an outside source such as the leader. Members often will not take responsibility upon themselves to go more deeply into their problems but will consent to do so if the leader takes a more active role in the process. Effective probing requires the leader to be aware of the sensitive points in the client's frame of reference and the limits to which the client can be asked to go. Probing should be tentative, always leaving an avenue open for the client to back off if the procedure gets too threatening. Probing is useful in helping members learn the process of introspection and can be an effective means of gradually moving the group to deeper levels of interaction and problems.

Member: I know I have some real feelings of anger inside me, but I don't really know where they come from.

Leader: So you know you feel angry but don't know why. I wonder, could you identify any situations where you feel more angry than in other situations?

Tone Setting. Tone setting is subtle but crucial to the atmosphere and attitude of the group. It is the process of establishing a qualitative standard the group can observe and to which it can respond. Leaders can establish the tone of the session in many ways, including the arrangement of the physical setting, the personal mood that they express to the group, the character of their actions in the leadership role, and the activities or suggestions they propose in the group. Tone setting is important in the initial moments of the group session but also can be extremely useful when the group could benefit from a change in mood. Comic relief often serves the purpose of pulling the group out of extended discussions that have become emotionally draining. Tone setting gives members a base rate to use in gauging their own behaviors, feelings, and thoughts and provides them with a means of determining how to respond appropriately.

Leader: We've been struggling along here talking about all the things we have to change about ourselves, so as a point of contrast let's have each person share a couple of things about themselves or their life that don't need changing.

Confronting. Confronting is the skill of getting members to face things about themselves that they are blatantly or subtly attempting to avoid. The use of this skill can have potentially explosive repercussions, which may be detrimental to the group and its members if not handled appropriately and sensitively. In group counseling confrontation should generally be tentative and should never force a member into a corner with no escape. This skill is most useful in helping the group deal with discrepancies and inconsistencies in individual and group behavior. It also is helpful in getting members to face responsibility in regard to their problems and behavior.

Confrontation should only be used after a foundation of trust and acceptance has been laid and when the relationship in the group is cohesive in nature. With these safeguards the members realize that confrontation is directed at their actions, not their persons, and is motivated by intentions that are constructive rather than destructive.

> **Member:** I am doing everything I possible can to fulfill my contract of studying one hour a day at home, but I just can't make it.
>
> **Leader:** As you came in today, Jack, I heard you telling Sally you watched TV for three hours last night and never cracked a book. How do you explain that in connection with what you just said.

Personal Sharing. Personal sharing is the means by which leaders disclose themselves to the group. It is an important skill because any time leaders do give of themselves by sharing personal concerns or perceptions it usually has a profound effect on the group. Seldom is the impact neutral. For this reason the leader's personal self-disclosure can facilitate the group process as well as help him or her deal with what is going on inside. Of course, leaders must be sensitive to the amount and depth of personal revelation the group can handle. Personal sharing is useful in setting an example for group members and helps them see the leader as a fellow human being. It also serves the function of demonstrating that the leader is willing to engage in the same process in which the members are expected to become involved.

> **Leader:** I guess I'm really not with it today. My mind keeps wandering ahead to vacation next week when I'll be having surgery.
>
> **Member:** I thought you were kind of daydreaming today, but I guess you're just a little uptight about your operation.

Modeling. Modeling is the skill of demonstrating by exemplary action the qualities, characteristics, and skills that members may need to learn to function effectively in the group and in their personal lives. Leaders are models whether they choose to be or not because of their position in the group. Therefore leaders must make the best use of the situation rather than leaving their modeling impact to chance. Modeling is helpful in teaching members important interpersonal skills that will make communication and interaction in the group more effective. It also is useful in alleviating the problems of orientation in the group process. Members can take their cues from the leader and model their own behavior and involvement accordingly.

> **Leader:** Today I would like to begin the session by having each of you describe yourself as if you were your own best friend. Use your first name and the third person at all times in describing yourself. I'll start with myself and you can see how it works. Jim is . . .

GROUP-LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS

Skills are only the building blocks that leaders use to perform their functions. The manner in which the leader uses his or her skills is dictated by their personality, theoretical orientation, and nature of the group process. Which skills are used, at what time and for what purpose depict the ***functions of group leadership.*** Functions are the means by which leaders help the group process develop in accord with the needs of the group members and the goals of the group. Leader functions embody the essential components of a leader's group theory and approach. Although the manner of carrying out the various functions is influenced by training, theoretical orientation, and leader personality, their basic impact on the group remains much the same. The following functions are not mutually exclusive, but they do tend to be relatively comprehensive and particularly relevant to the group counseling process.

Promoting Interaction

One of the primary functions of the group leader is to promote interaction in the group. An atmosphere of interaction accelerates group integration, and leaders must do their utmost to promote its development. This function is as much a contingency of what leaders do not do as it is of what they do do. Leaders who dominate, sermonize, evaluate, teach, and moralize in group counseling tend to deter interaction rather than promote it. Leaders who are able to share leadership responsibility, relinquish the role of expert by encouraging members to help each other, and include all the group members in the discussion create conditions that are highly conducive to therapeutic group interaction and member involvement. Leaders also can promote interaction by the physical arrangements they set up in the group. Groups that meet in comfortable rooms and sit in a circle as opposed to a square or ellipse find it much easier to relate and communicate with one another. The use of a skill such as linking to promote member-to-member communication is very useful in carrying out this function. Another effective technique is personal sharing. If leaders share their feelings and perceptions especially early in the group's development they will encourage members to interact with each other in much the same way. The overall purpose of this function is to create an atmosphere that encourages honest, spontaneous give-and-take discussion among members.

Facilitating Interaction

The facilitating function, though similar to the promoting function in many ways has several unique qualities that merit its separate consideration. Lakin (n.d.) stated that one essential function of any group leader is to facilitate social interaction. Facilitation implies that action is taken to enhance interaction that is already occurring. In other words, facilitating is a responsive function. It depends on the group to provide the stimulus that propels it into action. The leader responds to the action by suggesting methods that make communication patterns more meaningful and effective. Facilitation is directly related to increasing understanding in the group. Its effective use is dependent on the group leader's sensitivity and awareness and hinges on the ability to express one's self clearly to the group members. Chapter 11 includes a discussion of the use of communication exercises in performing this function and elaborates on its nature.

Initiating Interaction

The initiating function refers to the leader's active role in structuring the interaction of the group. It can be utilized to generate interaction and determine *what* the focus of that interaction will be or *how* it will proceed. The action skills are very important in performing this function, as are activities designed to make things happen in the group. The effective use of this function depends on the leader's knowledge of the group process and his or her expertise in determining the needs of the group members. In most cases initiating is done to direct the group to considerations the leader deems beneficial to the members. The initiating function also is useful in alleviating anxieties caused by unstructured situations. Chapter 11 describes the use of communication exercises in carrying out the initiating function and gives more details as to its nature.

Guiding Interaction

The guiding function of the group leader has been alluded to in Hulse's (1950) description of the dynamics of group therapy. "Tension is the motor which keeps the therapeutic group going. Anxiety is the fuel that makes the motor run. The group therapist becomes the responsible conductor of this vehicle" [p. 834]. The group, because of its complex and potentially destructive nature, needs someone to keep it goal-oriented and to steer interaction into the most beneficial channels. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) stated that this guiding function helps the group move toward its accepted goals and is the "sum total of the counselor's efforts to utilize effectively the unique benefits of the group situation for personal growth" (p. 118). Lakin (n.d.) refers to this function as the leader's role in "intermanaging interaction." The skills of most consequence in performing this function are the interaction skills, although other skills such as tone setting and questioning are also useful.

Some theorists stress the guiding function as primary and cast the leader in the role of a participant-observer who refrains from personal involvement, stepping in only to guide the group when it deviates from its set purpose and then stepping out again. Vorrath and Brentro's (1974) Positive Peer Culture Groups operate on this model. An important aspect of this function is the leader's ability to control the speed and depth of involvement and interaction. Leaders must be able to encourage members to recognize feelings and proceed to deeper levels and yet maintain a modulated pace that does not leave members behind or hanging.

Intervening

The intervening function is used to protect group members and contain excesses in the group process. It is used to ensure that each member can exercise the right to be heard and retain the right to privacy. Intervening is necessary to counter the dangers of the group process. Groups may not give support when it is needed, may distort reality, or create pressures that lead to loss of control (Lakin, n.d.). If any of these situations becomes imminent, the leader must intervene to prevent them from damaging individuals or disrupting the group process. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) listed several instances in which leader intervention may be appropriate:

1. When individuals are victimized by group forces.

2. When groups create excessive anxieties or pressures for conformity.

3. When hostility is misdirected.

4. When the majority (consensus of opinion) may be incorrect.

5. When individuals are forced to accept group solutions.

6. When groups become too comfortable and no action toward resolving problems occurs.

Intervening may also entail keeping time limits and bringing the group discussion back to its proper focus. Most of the interaction skills are useful in performing this function, and the leader must be willing to take responsibility to preserve the psychological well-being of members and the therapeutic intent of the group process. Hansen, Warner, and Smith (1980) referred to actions involved in intervening and the rules-keeping function described next as "executive functions."

Rules-Keeping

Rules-keeping is one of the more technical but necessary functions the leader performs in the group. Its basic intent is to see that the group interaction stays within the framework of the guidelines established to govern that interaction. These guidelines or rules may be imposed by the leader at the outset of the group (See Figure 5.2), can be developed cooperatively between the leader and members, or can be allowed to evolve during the course of group interaction. In any event the leader's function is to see that they are maintained, using the authority of the leader role to prevent any infractions that might develop. The performance of this function should not be arbitrary but should be solidly based on the leader's knowledge of what constitutes therapeutic group interaction and sensitivity to member needs.

Consolidating

The consolidating function of the leader is the action he or she takes to draw things together in a meaningful way so that group members can relate to them. It also may involve tying together numerous thoughts and feelings in a brief and coherent way. Leaders must be aware of the consensus in the group in order to perform this function effectively. They also must realize that differences of opinion will exist and use this function to help members communicate and understand their differences as well as their similarities. Skills that facilitate this function are clarifying, summarizing, and linking, and its main purpose is to keep the group members at the same level of understanding as the group process unfolds and develops.

Enhancing Communication

The function of enhancing communication serves to help group members express themselves more precisely and understand each other more accurately. The leader is able to perform this function by focusing attention on each client's needs, exhibiting genuine caring but at the same time maintaining a healthy separateness to allow for objectivity. Ohlsen (1970) described the nature of this function as "When he is at his best, a counselor can feel deeply with a client without experiencing emotional reactions which are deleterious to the counseling relationship" (p. 2).

The leader who operates in this manner builds relationships in the group by being empathic. The skills of greatest use for enhancing communication are the reaction skills, all of which depend on the counselor's ability to listen actively and to understand members sensitively. Leaders must be aware of multiple levels in the member's verbalizations. They must be able to take words and actions at face value while at the time realize that an underlying ambivalence may be in the message. The leader who can work to merge external expression with internal motivation in the member's communication will be making significant progress in securing a foundation of understanding in the group. The effectiveness of this function depends on the leader's ability to observe and deal with the impact of each member's communication on the rest of the group. Ohlsen (1974) stated that "While trying to detect the speaker's feelings, encouraging him to act and reinforcing his desired behaviors, the counselor also must note how the speaker's behavior is influencing others and how the behavior of others is influencing the speaker" (p. 144). In this way the leader can work with the total process encompassing expression, reception, and response and thus increase the influence of communication in the helping process.

The group leader can accelerate and enhance communication by encouraging members to speak directly to each other rather than to the leader (Yalom, 1985). Getting members to send "I-messages," using first-and second-person pronouns, has a significant effect in drawing members together. This personalization of communication clarifies meaning and makes speakers more cognizant of their own motivation, thus improving the quality of their messages.

Resolving Conflicts

If one adage about the group process consistently holds true, it is that the course of group counseling never runs smooth. Inevitably in the process of intense personal interaction, conflicts will arise. The group leader leader has the task to see that these conflicts are resolved beneficially if not harmoniously for all parties involved. This function requires all the skill and sensitivity the counselor can muster to effect it constructively. It requires that the leader be aware of sources of conflict such as frustrated individual needs, conflicting goals, hidden agendas, disappointment with leader functioning, groping for structure, and anxiety over a new and novel situation. This function requires that leaders know how to implement strategies for conflict resolution. They must know when to step in and when to allow the group or the particular members to work it out. But most of all they must be willing to face conflict openly and positively, always attempting to identify its roots and to use it constructively in helping group members grow.

Mobilizing Group Resources

This function more than any other determines the optimum, level of a group's helping effectiveness. Unique to group counseling is that it offers the individual many potential sources of help as opposed to just one. The effective group leader therefore is able to assess what the group resources are and mobilize them for the benefit of the individual and the group. The more successful leaders are in performing this function the less pressure and responsibility they will feel in being the expert in the group. The more adept they are at drawing upon group resources the more self-esteem members will experience, which in turn will improve the morale of the group. The purpose of this function is to get group members to help themselves by helping each other. Group leaders who function well in this way find that many of the other functions are no longer necessary because the group will take responsibility for performing them.

Most of the skills described earlier assist the group counselor in performing this function but the key to its effectiveness is the leader's willingness to operate behind the scenes through group members rather than in a direct helping capacity. Counselors who prefer to do the "counseling" themselves often do not utilize the group's helping potential to the fullest possible extent.

ISSUES IN GROUP LEADERSHIP

Leaders must grapple with several basic issues in developing their own approaches to group counseling. The manner in which they resolve these issues determines their leadership style. Although theories and training influence and guide the leader's development, the responsibility still remains for each person to decide how to function in the group. The purpose of this section is to elucidate those basic issues confronting all group leaders, the resolution of which affects the group process and molds the unique style of the leader's approach.

Responsibility

The issue of responsibility is always difficult to clarify. It can be discussed on a philosophical level, looking at the helping process and making corresponding assumptions about the basic nature of man. On the one hand, if people are viewed as incapable of helping themselves, then the helping process must take responsibility to direct and influence them to help them resolve their problems and live more satisfying and fulfilling lives. On the other hand, if people are viewed as capable and having sufficient resources to help themselves, the helping process need only entail providing a set of conditions or an environment where those resources can emerge and be used by the individual to resolve problems and enhance life adjustment. In between these two extremes are a multitude of positions that different theories expound as the proper perspective on the responsibility issue in the helping process. However, the transition from theory to practice is difficult, especially in group counseling where the leader must cope with a wide variety of expectations and pressures from group members in addition to handling the responsibility issue in a professional manner.

Leader responsibility is an issue on a continuum, with one extreme stressing the leader as totally responsible for all the interaction and impact of the group and the other extreme placing the responsibility totally on the group. Somewhere in between is Mahler's (1969) position, which states that "the main responsibility for growth of the group rests with members but the leader does all he can to facilitate that process" (p. 194). Although these positions describe the relationship of leader responsibility to the group, they do not elaborate on how responsibility is actually manifested.

Leaders who assume total responsibility actually take charge of the entire experience of the group and its members and operate in much the same manner as the director of a movie. They direct, manipulate, push, confront, structure, and demonstrate to bring out the best possible picture or result. This result should be in accord with individual needs and group goals but the extent to which the group experience coincides with those needs and goals is entirely the responsibility of the leader. The weaknesses of this type of leadership are much the same as those of autocractic leadership styles. Members do not learn to take responsibility for themselves, they learn dependence rather that autonomy, and their needs are met only to the extent that leaders personally can expand themselves and their expertise to encompass them. Since most group approaches aspire to increase individual responsibility rather than decrease it, this particular approach to leadership is seldom seen in total. Some leaders, however, begin by taking total responsibility and gradually shift responsibility to the members as they see them develop the competence to handle it. This process of responsibility transfer is usually concurrent with the developmental process of problem solving, which gradually moves the members from dependence on outside help at the beginning to dependence on themselves at the end of the group process.

Leaders who invest total responsibility in the group tend to operate from a frame of reference that is based on confidence and trust in the members and the group to do what is best for their own growth. They depend on the group to monitor its excesses and negative reactions. The group's ability to function in a responsible manner is often demonstrated by members stepping in to give support and diverting overly emotional or unjust feedback into more positive channels. Members in this type of group certainly learn responsibility but may at times mistake freedom for license. Because of the extensive pressure groups can exert at times they become so embroiled in the interaction of the moment that they miss the cues that indicate potential psychological or personal damage is imminent. In these instances this style of leadership breaks down and could have adverse effects on the total group process.

The key considerations in handling the responsibility issue relate to the general group goal of helping members learn individual responsibility and guaranteeing their personal wellbeing in the group process. However the leader decides to operate, responsibility must always be evaluated in terms of its impact on the members' ability to function adequately on their own. If the leader's actions do not increase member independence and autonomy in resolving their personal concerns and problems, those actions are anti-therapeutic. If, however, the leader's stand on responsibility accentuates member self-sufficiency in a constructive and growth producing way, then those actions are congruent with the intent of the helping process.

In my opinion the leader is always ultimately responsible for the well-being of group members and for ensuring that the group interaction is constructive in nature. In other words, leaders because of their training and professional commitment are remiss if they do not exercise their responsibility to prevent negative consequences in the group. Leaders can share responsibility to a very large degree, but they can never abdicate their responsibility. Doing so completely undermines the nature of the helping profession and is detrimental to positive therapeutic intervention. Leaders must be willing to divert topic and conversational trends that seem to be shaping into negative and damaging content (Blaker & Samo, 1973). They must be willing to intervene to protect members and to serve as a reality check if the group does not do so. As Lakin (1969) noted, responsibility must be consciously exercised and modeled by the leader if the group is to qualify as a professional therapeutic venture.

Many of the following issues are contingent upon the stand the group leader takes regarding responsibility. Leader decisions about structure and role are particularly tied in with responsibility. In fact, most of the issues are a direct outgrowth of the leader's view of responsibility.

Role of the Group Leader

The role of the group leader is not only a composite of functions performed but a manifestation of the philosophical biases held. The role issue primarily concentrates on how leaders interact in the group in terms of behavior. In actuality the leader role is a conglomeration of subroles that emerge on the basis of interaction between the group leader's personality and philosophical orientation and needs of the group. Those subroles that are most frequently used tend to form the character of the leader's style and influence the nature of the group process.

The most common subroles are those of director, facilitator, participator, observer, and expert. The director takes an active role in determining the nature and focus of group interaction; the facilitator is responsive to what is already occurring in the group; the participator operates on an equal level with other group members in the discussion; the observer stands apart from the interaction interjecting comments as they appear necessary or appropriate; and the expert is the source of knowledge and wisdom that can be utilized to help members or improve the group process. These roles are not always separate entities, but they do involve significant identifiable characteristics that perpetuate the group process. Each will be discussed in turn.

The ***director role*** helps the group process by giving it structure and direction. It is closely aligned with the philosophy that places responsibility in the hands of the leader. It enables group leaders to assert themselves in the group process and gives members respite from struggling with ambiguous circumstances. The use of the director role should be either to meet individual needs in the group or to initiate useful group interaction. Too heavy a dependence on this role reduces opportunities for group members to assert themselves and reduces flexibility in the group.

The ***facilitator role*** depends on the group for an impetus to action. It helps the group process develop by responding to the direction and goals initiated by the group. This role is related to the position where responsibility is placed in the hands of group members. Members feel more freedom to direct their own interaction but are also confident the leader will step in to make suggestions or help when appropriate. Total reliance on this role may create undue pressure and frustration in the group and may even lead to disenchantment with the group process as a whole. Mahler (1969) pointed out that some counselors confuse the facilitation role by combining it with a misconceived notion of permissiveness. "Some counselors appear to be comparable to indecisive and insecure parents;

they hope that their "permissiveness" will enable (clients) to find themselves. However, counselors must have a sense of purpose and direction or they will be able to accomplish very little" [p. 17]. In other words, the facilitator role is enacted according to a specific purpose and is not just a matter of rolling with the tide of group interaction.

The ***participator role*** probably gives group leaders the most difficulty. Knowing when and how to participate with members is hard to determine. Sometimes members really do not want to know about the leader and prefer to have him or her to help out only in times of crisis. Other times leaders may think they are participating on an equal level only to find they are being perceived by members as dominating. Of particular importance in this role is the amount and type of sharing the counselor does. The decision about how deeply counselors can or should go into their own lives and feelings is a difficult one. Mahler (1969) indicated that the participatory leader has the most positive impact on group morale and feelings. Through leader participation members come to see the leader as human too and do not feel that they are being forced to engage in things the leader is not willing to do. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) also pointed out that the effective group counselor is one who is viewed by group members as being with them and for them as individuals, and participating can contribute to that perception. An effective participator can usually be active in the group without creating the undesirable side effects usually associated with subroles that cast the leader in a more separated position from members. Participating is a good alternative to passive group leadership for those leaders who want to be active but do not want to dominate the group process.

The ***observer role*** is one of the most flexible roles the leader can play because it can usually be effectively combined with other roles (participant-observer, director-observer). In its more pure form leaders attempt to maintain an objective yet sensitive awareness of what is transpiring in the group, but at times it can rankle members because they feel they are being analyzed and watched. This reaction can cause rifts between the members and the leader. If, however, leaders can parlay their observations into meaningful comments that are beneficial to individuals or the group process, the leader's role as observer can be vindicated and negative reactions curtailed.

The ***expert role*** of the counselor is potentially both the most detrimental and most useful role the counselor can play in the group. The temptation to be the "expert" is one of the major pitfalls of many group leaders. Because of it leaders sometimes get themselves into an advice-giving bind from which they have difficulty extricating themselves. Mahler (1969) stated the basic problem with leaders who are too quick to use their expertise. "A counselor is lacking in knowledge and understanding of how behavior is changed if he is too eager to give answers, solutions to problems, or advice instead of helping individuals discover answers and solutions for themselves" [p. 17]. The counselor as expert is also a necessary and useful aspect of the group-leadership role. Leader training, experience, and knowledge are invaluable assets in helping individuals with their problems and in developing a therapeutic group atmosphere. Striking a balance between using expertise and refusing to do so is a complex task for the group leader. One general guideline in determining whether the leader should opt for the role of expert or not is to assess the motivation for that action. If it is in the best interests of an individual or the group process, most likely the effect will be positive. If, however, it is motivated by self-gratification or ego reinforcement on the counselor's part, it should be used hesitantly. And if both of these factors prompt its use, leaders can enjoy the best of both worlds, enhancing the group process and gratifying their own needs for esteem at the same time.

The interplay between these roles is of significant import to the group process. The leader must carefully assess their utility and influence in order to function in the most positive manner as a leader and develop professional competence as a group counselor.

The Structure Controversy*

The controversy of structured groups versus unstructured groups has been with us almost as long as the group movement

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*Note: For a full discussion of "Group Counseling and the Dynamic of Structure: refer to *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, Volume 4, Number 4 (Fall, 1979).

itself. Although some would argue that lack of structure by the group leader is in itself a form of structure, a semantic battle does little to help the group leader resolve this issue. Landreth (1973) zeroed in on this issue definitively when he wrote that "the basic question is not whether or not to structure but rather what kind of structuring is needed and how much to structure" (p. 371). Bednar and Langenbaum (1979) added that no such thing as a linear polarity of structure to nonstructure exists because the non-imposition of expectations (ambiguity) is in and of itself a structure. From these premises then our discussion will derive.

Nonstructured groups basically mean that the leader does little to initiate group interaction and functions in the more responsive capacity of a facilitator a la Rogers. Structured groups usually refer to groups that the leader directs and runs in an initiating manner, often with the help of structured activities and with ostensible control over the interaction. In the former case the leader's image is submerged in the group process to a point where his/her eminence as the titular head of the group is lost. In the latter case the leader is always an obviously significant person who seldom loses either position or influence as the leader of the group. Betwixt these two are many positions that reflect more or less the basic positions.

A perusal of the pros and cons of these basic positions on structuring reveals the surprisingly complementary nature of the two positions. What is an advantage to one side is a disadvantage to the other and vice versa. Thus when viewed through a flexible perspective, movement one way or the other on the structure continuum becomes less a liability and more an asset in making the group-counseling process effective. Thus we come full circle to Landreth's (1973) position.

The arguments for less structuring revolve around the learning-by-experience philosophy. Group members in struggling with the lack of structure come to realize the need for and nature of positive structure and work to develop it. In this way they learn personal responsibility and identify more closely with their work. Less structure gives more opportunity for individual differences to be accounted for and provides members with more freedom to act constructively on their own behalf and in helping others. The leader in nonstructured groups needs to tolerate ambiguity and risk member dissatisfaction and negative feedback during the initial phases when members are grappling with a nonleader situation. When successful the nonstructured approach creates strong group cohesiveness, high morale, and a positive therapeutic milieu in which members can help and be helped without the prior sanction of the group leader to do so.

Arguments for the ***structured group*** more than compensate for the weakness of the nonstructured approach, just as the strengths of the nonstructured approach counter the deficiencies of structured groups. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) referred to structuring as programming. "To program a group means that the group counselor, the official group leader, chooses to initiate specific group behaviors of his own choosing at some time in the group's life. Spontaneous interaction. Of course, refers to behaviors that originate within the context of the group life itself" (p. 122). Bach (1954) enumerated several advantages to structuring. It enhances cooperation in early group life, decreases leader and member anxiety, enlarges weak minority participation, contrasts individual performance against group performance, differentiates group life from the outside world culture, and reduces emotional anxiety over free expression without altering the leader's role. Landreth (1973) added that structuring may help leaders approach the group with more self-confidence, a prerequisite to the development of a cohesive group. By structuring, group members know what is expected and can therefore concentrate their energies toward accomplishing the goals of the group and resolving their own problems.

The point of the matter is that the need for structure varies from group to group and leader to leader. Some groups do not need any help in structuring, while others need help because they will not or do not know how to assume responsibility for doing so. In addition, the purpose for which groups are formed greatly affects the need for structure. Thus the resolution of this issue is contingent on a variety of factors, but the most important variable seems to be the leader's propensity to determine how much structure is needed and to act in accordance with that awareness.

Group Leadership: Art or Science?

The controversy of art versus science sometimes is raised in the helping professions, particularly in those who are concerned with helping people resolve psychological and personal-social problems. However, this issue need not force a group leader into a decision one way or the other since in all probability leading a group is a combination of both. Mahler (1969) described leadership as a science because its methods and procedures are exposed to objective assessment for validation. Leadership is also an art because it depends on the "counselor's intuitive sensitivity in knowing when to make a suggestion or provide information, when and how to challenge clients to action, and when to support client efforts to face disturbing feelings" (p.12). Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) stated that successful group counselors are an integrated blend of specialist and artist. Ohlsen, Horne, and Lawe (1988) referred to the leader as both a scientist and a practitioner.

Leaders must be scholars who keep themselves continually abreast of new knowledge pertaining to the field of group work. They must be scientists who use empirical methods to assess the impact of the group process and evaluate results. And they must be artists who can use their knowledge and the results of scientific inquiry to meet the needs of group members, help them resolve their problems, and guide the group process. Any time leaders lose sight of the personal element in attempting to conduct groups according to standardized scientific principles, they will become rigid and inflexible, jeopardizing the effectiveness of the group in helping individuals. Any time leaders rely only on their own personality and artistic prowess in leading a group, they lose the perspective of objective evaluation, which is necessary to determine the benefit and consistency of the group process in helping people resolve their problems. So the resolution of this whole issue is to develop a balance between leadership as an art that accounts for human differences and uniqueness and leadership as a science that supplies structure and objectivity. In this way the best qualities of both can be used to make the group-counseling process a dynamic and viable method of helping people.

Rules for Group Interaction

One of the most important issues that demand the attention of the group leader is the development of agreed-upon rules to govern the group's interaction. This issue has been referred to briefly in discussing the rules-keeping function of the group leader but needs to be reiterated here for emphasis.

Many strategies are available for handling the rules issue in groups. Some leaders prefer to impose a comprehensive set of ground rules, discussing them thoroughly with group members either in a screening interview or during the first session of the group. Others present a skeleton list of basic rules and then rely on the group to propose additional rules relevant to that particular group. Other leaders make the need for guidelines to govern interaction a group task. Together with the leader the group works out the rules by which they will interact. Leaders who prefer this method praise it as an excellent means of developing cohesiveness and commitment to the rules and the group. A final strategy is to develop ground rules as the need arises. In this approach the list takes on a developmental perspective, since needed rules are added as the group moves from stage to stage in its life cycle. In all approaches are two main similarities; (1) the group needs to arrive at consensus regarding the rules and be willing to act in accord with them, and (2) the leader is responsible to see that they are sufficiently comprehensive, reasonable, and adhered to.

Ethical Practice

The topic of ethical practice in counseling and psychotherapy and more specifically in group work is a topic large enough to merit a whole chapter or even a book. Corey, Corey, and Callahan (1979) have written a book in which they addressed ethical practice generally. A special issue of the *Journal of Specialists in Group Work* (Volume 7, number 3; September, 1982) focused on "Ethical Issues in Group Work." Both are sources to which the reader is referred. In addition, ASGW has developed Ethical Guidelines for Group Leaders which appear in Figure 6.2. Become familiar with them in both a general and a specific sense (Gumaer, 1982).

Certainly group leaders have a professional commitment to function in accord with the ethical codes developed by the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) and the American Psychological Association (APA). In addition,

(Continued on page 230)

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR GROUP LEADERS[1]

[1]Approved by the ASGW Executive Board, November 11, 1980.

PREAMBLE

One characteristic of any professional group is the possession of a body of knowledge and skills and mutually acceptable ethical standards for putting them into practice. Ethical standards consist of those principles which have been formally and publicly acknowledged by the membership of a profession to serve as guidelines governing professional conduct, discharge of duties, and resolution of moral dilemmas. In this document, the Association for Specialists in Group Work has identified the standards of conduct necessary to maintain and regulate the high standards of integrity and leadership among its members.

The Association for Specialists in Group Work recognizes the basic commitment of its members to the Ethical Standards of its parent organization, the American Association for Counseling and Development, and nothing in this document shall be construed to supplant that code. These standards are intended to complement the AACD standards in the area of group work by clarifying the nature of ethical responsibility of the counselor in the group setting and by stimulating a greater concern for competent group leadership.

The following ethical guidelines have been organized under three categories: the leader's responsibility for providing information about group work to clients, the group leader's responsibility for providing group counseling services to clients, and the group leader's responsibility for safeguarding the standards of ethical practice.

A. Responsibility for Providing Information about Group Work and Group Services

A-1. Group leaders shall fully inform group members, in advance and preferably in writing, of the goals in the group, qualifications of the leader, and procedures to be employed.

A-2. The group leader shall conduct a pre-group interview with each prospective member for purposes of screening, orientation, and, in

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Figure 6.2. Ethical Guidelines for Group Leaders. Source: Association for Specialists in Group Work. Alexandria, VA: Author, 1980. Reproduced by permission. Copyright AACD. No further reproduction approved without further permission of AACD.

Figure 6.2. Continued.

so far as possible, shall select group members whose needs and goals are compatible with the established goals of the group; who will not impede the group process; and whose well-being will not be jeopardized by the group experience.

A-3. Group leaders shall protect members by defining clearly what confidentiality means, why it is important, and the difficulties involved in enforcement.

A-4. Group leaders shall explain, as realistically as possible, exactly what services can and cannot be provided within the particular group structure offered.

A-5. Group leaders shall provide prospective clients with specific information about any specialized or experimental activities in which they may be expected to participate.

A-6. Group leaders shall stress the personal risks involved in any group, especially regarding potential life-changes, and help group members explore their readiness to face these risks.

A-7. Group leaders shall inform members that participation is voluntary and that they may exit from the group at any time.

A-8. Group leaders shall inform members about recording of sessions and how tapes will be used.

B. Responsibility for Providing Group Services to Clients

B-1. Group leaders shall protect member rights against physical threats, intimidation, coercion, and undue peer pressure insofar as is reasonably possible.

B-2. Group leaders shall refrain from imposing their own agendas, needs, and values on group members.

B-3. Group leaders shall insure to the extent that it is reasonably possible that each member has the opportunity to utilize group resources and interact within the group by minimizing barriers such as rambling and monopolizing time.

B-4. Group leaders shall make every reasonable effort to treat each member individually and equally.

B-5. Group leaders shall abstain from inappropriate personal relationships with members throughout the duration of the group and any subsequent professional involvement.

Figure 6.2. Continued.

B-6. Group leaders shall help promote independence of members from the group in the most efficient period of time.

B-7. Group leaders shall not attempt any technique unless thoroughly trained in its use or under supervision by an expert familiar with the intervention.

B-8. Group leaders shall not condone the use of alcohol or drugs directly prior to or during group sessions.

B-9. Group leaders shall make every effort to assist clients in developing their personal goals.

B-10. Group leaders shall provide between-session consultation to group members and follow-up after termination of the group, as needed or requested.

C. Responsibility for Safeguarding Ethical Practice

C-1. Group leaders shall display these standards or make them available to group members.

C-2. Group leaders have the right to expect ethical behavior from colleagues and are obligated to rectify or disclose incompetent, unethical behavior demonstrated by a colleague by taking the following actions:

(a) To confront the individual with the apparent violation of ethical guidelines for the purposes of protecting the safety of any clients and to help the group leader correct any inappropriate behaviors.

(b) Such a complaint should be made in writing and include the specific facts and dates of the alleged violation and all relevant supporting data. The complaint should be forwarded to:

The Ethics Committee
c/o The President
Association for Specialists in Group Work
599 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

The envelope must be marked "CONFIDENTIAL" in order to assure confidentiality for both the accuser(s) and the alleged violator(s). Upon receipt, the President shall (a) check on membership status of the charged member(s), (b) confer with

Figure 6.2. Continued.

legal counsel, and (c) send the case with all pertinent documents to the chairperson of the ASGW Ethics Committee within ten (10) working days after the receipt of the complaint.

(c) If it is determined by the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee that the alleged breach of ethical conduct constitutes a violation of the "Ethical Guidelines," then an investigation will be started within ten (10) days by at least one member of the Committee plus two additional ASGW members in the locality of the alleged violation. The investigating committee chairperson shall: (a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint, (b) review the complaint and supporting data, (c) send a letter of acknowledgement to the member(s) of the complaint regarding alleged violations along with a request for a response and relevant information related to the complaint and (e) inform members of the Ethics Committee by letter of the case and present a plan of action for investigation.

(d) All information, correspondence, and activities of the Ethics Committee will remain confidential. It shall be determined that no person serving as an investigator on a case have any disqualifying relationship with the alleged violator(s).

(e) The charged party(ies) will have not more than 30 days in which to answer the charges in writing. The charged party(ies) will have free access to all cited evidence from which to make a defense, including the right to legal counsel and a formal hearing before the ASGW Ethics Committee.

(f) Based upon the investigation of the Committee and any designated local ASGW members one of the following recommendations may be made to the Executive Board for appropriate action:

1. Advise that the charges be dropped.

2. Reprimand and admonishment against repetition of the charged conduct.

3. Notify the charged member(s) of his/her right to a formal hearing before the ASGW Ethics Committee, and request a response be made to the Ethics Chairperson as to his/her decision on the matter. Such hearing would be conducted in accordance with the AACD Policy and Procedures for Processing Complaints of Ethical Violations, "Procedures for

Figure 6.2. Continued.

Hearings," and would be scheduled for a time coinciding with the annual AACD convention. Conditions for such hearing shall also be in accordance with the AACD Policy and Procedures document, "Options Available to the Ethics Committee, item 3."

4. Suspension of membership for a specified period from ASGW.

5. Dismissal from membership in ASGW.

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acting in accord with leader behaviors and responsibilities as outlined in the ASGW Standards is imperative. Beyond that the implications of many of the leader skills and functions already discussed that relate to protection of the individual, maintaining rules, and containing excesses are geared to helping group counselors operate in an ethical manner. Leaders have a professional obligation to function in the best interests of group members, the setting in which they function, and the community to the maximum degree possible. Of course there will always be conflicts of interests, ambiguous situations and crises in which counselors will have to make decisions based on their own professional judgment and their commitment to their clients. These decisions are never easy, require careful consideration before acting, and are best made under the auspices of ethical guidelines. Ultimately, group leaders are always responsible for "Ethical Practice" in their leadership role. Dye (1981) defined ethical practice as the "consensus of judgement on the part of competent, experienced practitioners" (p. 234). As such familiarity with ethical parameters provides the necessary background for making judgements in any particular group situation.

One pitfall that needs to be specifically mentioned about ethical practice relates to depending on group approval as a means of deciding whether a particular experience, method or technique is ethical or not. Leaders must always be aware of their own professional responsibility and the variety of personality differences among group members. The simple fact that professional people advocate an experience, or that members involved agree to an experience, does not necessarily justify those experiences as ethically defensible or psychologically sound. Any experiences, interactions, or activities of a questionable nature in the group require the maximum use of counselor competence in deciding to approve their inclusion.

Group-Leader Orientation: Individual, Group, or Theory

Group leaders are often faced with decisions about whether they should act in the interests of an individual, in support of the group, or in accord with a theoretical framework. Sometimes counselors feel between the "devil and the deep blue sea" when individuals lock horns with the group or when the group makes demands that are out of step with the counselor's theoretical rationale. Although no easy solution exists to this issue, Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) shedded some light on the subject: "No individual is sacrificed for a theory, no participant is required to respond to a given group technique, and no group member is in any way made to respond to queries that the counselor himself would not care to have asked of him" (p. 95). The implication seems to be that the interests of the individual come first, the group next, and the theory last. And the key criterion should be whether counselors are willing to put themselves in a similar spot. These ideas help, but they also are a bit naive in light of pressures placed on leaders in training and the leader's more extensive personal experience and maturity. (Leaders may be willing to do some things that are beyond the capability of the members.) Training programs consciously and unconsciously mold leaders according to certain theoretical and philosophical biases that are difficult to lay aside in the interests of groups or individuals. Similarly, certain individuals in the group who disrupt, resist, and abuse the group process may be difficult to support even when support is professionally appropriate. The solution to this situation therefore seems to require that leaders develop their own general guidelines but then face individual instances of conflict with openness and flexibility to be sure the best possible route is followed.

As was indicated at the beginning of this section, the manner in which group leaders resolve these issues determines leadership style and effectiveness. Leadership style is influenced by leader personality and training, the needs of group members, the nature of their problems, and the goals of the group. An effective leadership approach accounts for all these factors in resolving the issues of group leadership. In addition it operates within the context of group development. Effective leaders are able to guide their individual behavior so that what they say and do and how they handle the various issues of leadership are not antithetical to therapeutic group functioning.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

What might be termed special considerations for the group leader may have many dimensions. Every group member potentially qualifies as a special consideration on the basis of his or her individual uniqueness. The different purposes associated with different types of groups call upon leaders to make special efforts. But the intent of this discussion is to denote several areas that subsume individual cases and diverse groups and that when realized give the leader a sense of appreciation for the struggle, turmoil, and pressure group members experience in garnering benefit from the group process.

The first area is the realization that personal growth is a painful process, especially when associated with the psychological and personal-social components of one's life. Maslow (Katz, 1973) perhaps stated it best:

> We must appreciate that many people choose the worse rather than the better, that growth is often a painful process and may for this reason be shunned, that we are afraid of our own best possibilities in addition to loving them, and that we are all of us profoundly ambivalent about truth, beauty, virtue, loving them and fearing them too.(p. 80)

When we group leaders begin to feel frustrated with members' inability to act in ways to improve their lives, we must try to stop and sense the real effort, almost superhuman at times, required to do so. What may seem to all outward appearances the best and most sure-fire solution to a client's problems may for that person be a nemesis. What to the leader and the group is obviously good, appropriate, and possible action may be totally threatening to the person who must carry it out. Thus when encountering resistance we must bear in mind the possibility that the inner fear of change is a stifling factor in members' desire for and thrust toward growth. Seigelman (1983) noted that, "Major life change is not made easily. It usually takes some external deadline,. . .some outrage, . . . or burnout,. . .or some outside pressure. . .to get us moving. We don't divert the course of our lives lightly or easily—at least not if we are prudent" (p. 77).

Resistance to change by members in the group may be the result of an internal conflict associated with the needs to be adequate in coping with life. Combs and Snygg (1959) have proposed that two major forces that motivate us to be more adequate in our lives also are the cause of resistance. Every person experiences a desire to maintain the self as it is known (self-preservation) and a desire to improve the self (self-enhancement). These desires create a major conflict because in order for the latter to succeed some part of that which is dear to the former must be given up. This struggle is one of the major barriers facing group members in their effort to change. The risk of giving up that which is known about oneself, even though it causes problems, in exchange for something promising but unknown and untested is not easy. The group leader's ability to acknowledge and relate to this perpetual human reaction in members can do much to turn a confounding barrier into a facilitating resource.

While these first two areas deal with the special consideration of common psychological factors within individual members, the third area concerns the relationship of individual members in the group. The reaction of individual members in the group generally epitomizes man's lifelong struggle to "differentiate himself while retaining a feeling of unity with others" (Mahler, 1969, p. 33). The whole maturation process is a journey from dependence to independence to interdependence. Every human being wishes to be his or her own person while at the same time feeling part of a group. Finding the right balance is an extremely difficult task and maintaining it in all situations once found is nearly impossible. In interpersonal relationships the quest for autonomy and for intimacy often creates our greatest frustrations. No wonder then that group members at times flounder desperately in striking a suitable equilibrium between independence and conformity in the group process. Not surprisingly this equilibrium is easily upset, throwing both the individual and the group into a dither of defensive maneuvers and assertive challenges. The group leader who is sensitive to the existence of this struggle and cognizant of the fragile nature of individual-group relationships negotiated in the group will be able to act more constructively, less critically, and more patiently in helping the group prosper.

The importance of these realizations has primary relevance to the leader and secondary relevance to group members. Leaders who understand the pain of growing, sense the fear of change, feel the inner conflict in the struggle to improve one's self, and appreciate the battle waged between the individual and the group will have a more caring attitude in working with the group. This attitude will relieve many of the pressures and anxieties leaders experience, especially when groups do not go well. They will spend less time worrying, expend less energy in group- or self-flagellation, and concentrate more intensely on helping the members and promoting a therapeutic atmosphere in the group. This attitude of patience, encouragement, understanding, peace, and confidence will be transferred to group members, giving them reassurance that their struggles are worthwhile and that they are understood and appreciated.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The activities described in the following section fall into two categories. The first is methods or strategies for obtaining leadership experience that are grounded on a solid basis of professional training and supervision principles. The first eight learning activities are within this category. The second category contains exercises designed to assess leader characteristics or abilities and develop leader competencies. The last eight activities are in this second category.

Leading Groups in Undergraduate Classes

Many undergraduate classes in education, psychology, social work, human relations and other disciplines incorporate small group experiences into their requirements. These groups tend to have specific course related goals and are required so that attendance is mandatory. Even when provided as an adjunct option for extra-credit or broadening the learning endeavor, the groups are well received. Instructors are often amenable to graduate students in group classes leading these groups. The work load for professors is reduced while extending the learning potential for their students and is an excellent opportunity for graduate students to acquire valuable group leadership experience. A formal program of cooperation between the graduate and undergraduate instructors is preferable. However, if such an agreement does not exist, personally contacting undergraduate instructors and working out an individual independent study or field work experience is suitable. An advisable procedure is to be under some form of formal supervision (for credit) for liability purposes rather than volunteering your services.

Rotating Group Leadership

One method of obtaining an initial exposure to group leadership is to rotate leadership responsibility among members of a group formed as part of a group-counseling course. If the group is leaderless, a schedule can be organized beforehand designating the sequence of leaders. If the group has a leader—for example the instructor of the course—that person can retain the leadership role through the first few sessions to get the group going and then designate individual members to be in charge of later sessions. This type of experience serves the purpose of introducing prospective leaders to the role and function of group leadership and exposes them to a number of leadership styles, since each member's approach will reflect his or her own personality. A more important purpose is to give members an opportunity to assess the skills and characteristics of effective leadership. This can be done through follow-up feedback and discussion sessions in which the individual's approach can be reviewed and the issues of leadership discussed. The psychological pressure of this experience should be low-key because members will not get an in-depth leadership experience, probably leading the group only once or twice during the course of a quarter or semester. The focus on general group leadership should be retained as the main emphasis, and evaluation of individual performance should be secondary.

Rotating Co-Leadership

A variation of the method just mentioned, which gives added depth to the leadership experience, is to rotate co-leadership responsibility in the group. In this way two members can be in charge for longer time periods—say three to five sessions—and get a more definitive picture of the leader's role. Feedback from the instructor and the group can be given to the co-leaders after each session, and an overall evaluation can be conducted at the conclusion of their sessions. This stategy also lends itself to variations such as alternating partners, matching co-leaders on the basis of personality similarities or differences, and having co-leaders model specific philosophies of group leadership to expose members to a broader range of leadership possibilities. It also places members who assume the leadership roles under less pressure since they have a mutually available source of help and reinforcement in the form of the partner.

Co-Leadership with an Experienced Leader

One of the very best ways to develop group-leadership skill is the mentoring or apprenticeship process where a prospective leader co-leads with an experienced professional. The advantages of this approach are numerous. The experience is an intense and complete immersion in the leader's role. It supplies the prospective leader with a role model to follow and a source of support in crisis situations. It helps the new leader understand the responsibility involved by placing that responsibility directly on his or her shoulders, and it provides a safe place to experiment with the development of a personal style and approach. The difficulty in implementing this approach is finding enough experienced leaders to serve as models. Even then problems may occur in arranging schedules and getting the necessary approval to participate. However, these problems should not deter the counselor trainee or counselor educator from trying to develop such a program. If conscientious efforts are made to locate groups and experienced leaders, professional leaders are usually more than willing to take on novices as co-leaders and teach them the ropes.

Co-Leadership with Supervision

Another good way to develop valuable leadership experience is to have two potential leaders co-lead groups under the supervision of an experienced group leader. When experienced leaders can't be found to take on a co-leader, this alternative serves equally as well. It has many of the same advantages as the previous strategy and may be less threatening to the potential leaders. Sometimes new leaders tend to be withdrawn and passive in the presence of an experienced leader. In this case, both leaders are on an equal footing, feel more responsibility, and have less opportunity to be passive. This type of experience tends to be more action-oriented and less observation-oriented. An added dimension that serves as a control factor and a learning impetus is the inclusion of a supervisor. This method requires less time on the counselor educator's part than co-leading but still gives new leaders the benefit of experience and knowledge through feedback and evaluation sessions. Supervision of this nature introduces additional variables into the group process like videotaping or observation, but these tend to be accommodated easily by both the leaders and the group.

One problem with co-leadership (this pertains to all the strategies that involve co-leading) is that success depends on the ability of the co-leaders to work out an effective team approach to the group. Sometimes personality conflicts and differences of group-leadership style become obstacles that interfere with the development of a therapeutic group atmosphere. Co-leadership thus adds an important variable to the process. However, when co-leaders do develop a positive relationship in their group approach, they have a greater capacity for helping individuals and the group than a single leader.

Supervised Leadership in Practicum or Field Work

As has already been indicated, group-leadership experience should be the focus of a separate field-work experience. Once the counselor has developed a solid cognitive and experiential background in group work, the only way left to develop group-leadership ability is by leading groups. The advantages of a practicum setting should be utilized to facilitate that process. The supervision provided by the trainee's field supervisor and the practicum director are invaluable sources of learning. In addition, the sharing of experiences with other practicum members adds significantly to the learning and experience of the group leader. More effort is required, however, in establishing specific group-counseling practicums to complement the general practicum requirement. In this way counselors will have access to a more formal means of developing their group abilities on an experiential level. Such practicums would also encourage counselors in the field to enroll as a means of increasing their competence as group leaders.

Groups for Group Leaders

One specific type of leadership training format is the group for group leaders. The general nature of this procedure is to draw together a small group (six to twelve members) of counselors who are interested in further developing their expertise in groups. Under the direction of one or more qualified group experts, the group functions as both an intensive group experience and a leadership training procedure. In other words, the group leaders themselves form the group in which they gain their leadership experience. There are three basic components to this procedure. The first, of course, is the personal experience of each person as a member of the group. The second is related to those activities in the group that are designed to give the members experience in the leadership role, and the third is a cognitive component involving feedback and discussion of various leadership skills, functions, and issues.

This format allows much room for flexibility. One variation is for the group to be handled by two experts and have one experiential session and one cognitive session each week. One expert serves as the facilitator of the experiential session, while the other observes the experiential session, using observations as the basis for discussion and feedback in the cognitive session. During the experiential session members can rotate leadership responsibility or simply work with leaders as they emerge. The facilitator is there not to lead the group but to lend expertise, become personally involved, and assume ultimate responsibility in case negative circumstances arise in the group. The follow-up session is an analysis of the experiential session concentrating on group dynamics and essentials of group leadership.

Peer Consultation

One of the least used resources among counselors is the knowledge and experience of colleagues. This is particularly true in group counseling. It seems that asking a fellow counselor for help or feedback regarding one's counseling ability and skills is tantamount to an admission of incompetence. In fact, in many counseling programs the counselors actually know very little about what methods their associates are using, especially in their counseling sessions. Yet at professional meetings among strangers, innumerable instances occur of peers giving invaluable consultation to one another. This source can and should be used in local settings as well. Several suggestions might be helpful in making effective use of this professional resource, especially in regard to developing group-counseling expertise.

1. Obtain a total department/agency commitment to the use of group methods in counseling and therapy so that all members have a vested interest.
2. Develop a group program so that the need for expertise becomes apparent to all concerned.
3. Set aside specific time slots for consultation to occur rather than depending on catch-as-catch-can meeting arrangements.
4. Arrange schedules that allow for observation, and don't create added pressures on either the group leader or peer consultant.

5. Develop settings where observation can take place without causing embarrassment to the group, the leader, or the observer and without interfering in the group process.

6. Exchange roles so that equal opportunity is afforded to be the consultant and the consultee. Nothing is more irksome than to always be asking for consultation and never being asked for feedback in return.

7. Develop guidelines for consultation that specify criteria for evaluation, and establish a format for giving feedback. These guidelines should be the product of discussion and input involving all parties in the consulting relationship and should be agreed upon prior to any consultation occurring.

If these general guidelines are used, the threat of exposing one's methods to one's colleagues is lessened. In fact, peer consultation of this nature can not only be a professionally enhancing method of improving one's group skills but can also develop into a morale building process for the total department.

Group Leaders in My Life

Divide an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper into three columns both lengthwise and widthwise (9 sections total). In column 1 identify three different groups in which you have been that you have benefited from personally. In column 2 identify the names of the leader(s) of each of those groups. In column 3 describe the characteristics of the leader(s). Circle or underline the traits you believe you have. In small groups (3 to 4 persons) share the characteristics identified in the third column including your own. Use data from the activity to discuss traits of effective group leaders.

Classified Ad

Write a classified ad for a group leader. Include information such as personality traits; training; qualifications and credentials, expectations of the leadership role; setting; and clientele of the group. This activity may be used to initiate a discussion of the essential nature and qualifications of a group leader. Instructions may be varied so that members write a classified ad for themselves as group leaders. Have group members read their classified ad to the group and facilitate a discussion around content. An effective follow-up activity is to have the group write a composite classified ad using the data and discussion from the individual ads.

Consensus Leadership Traits

Have each person in the group write two (2) or three (3) traits that represent effective group leadership. Form dyads and have the two to develop a composite list. Continue to merge subgroups (dyads to foursome and foursome to groups of eight, etc.) until a total group consensus or composite is attained. Use the consensus traits to initiate a discussion of effective group leaders.

Dimensions of Group Leadership

Using the "Dimension of Group Leadership" scale in Figure 6.3, have each group member place an asterisk at the point on each continuum that reflects his or her self perception of self on that polarity. When completed connect the marks to create a profile. Have each person present his or her profile to the group. Discuss results in terms of similarities and differences. Use the continuum constructs to derive goals for individuals to work on as group leaders. Continuum items may be added or deleted to create a scale that is appropriate to the group.

A modification of this activity is to use the "line-up" format described on page 446 and have group members physically place themselves on each continuum so that both self assessment and comparative personality data are available for discussion. This version allows access to feedback from others in the process as group members jostle to find their place and space in relation to others on each of the variables.

Personality Inventory Analysis

Since personality is a crucial factor in group leadership, the scale in Figure 6.4 enables prospective leaders to assess for

As a group leader I am:

Talkative	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Quiet
Directive	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Non-Directive
Humorous	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Serious
Confident	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Hesitant
Prepared	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Unprepared
Structured	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Non-structured
Confrontative	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Supportive
Comfortable	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Ill at Ease
Personable	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Aloof
Authoritative	___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___/___	Facilitative

Figure 6.3. Dimensions of group leadership.

themselves and obtain feedback as to their primary personality traits. Using the inventory in Figure 6.4 or modification thereof, have each member place a check mark in column one (self) identifying three characteristics that describe the general type of personality they portray to others most of the time. After doing that, write in the name of the other group members (one in each column) and place check marks by three traits that they believe best describe each person's personality. Share these data by having each person first share his or her own perception and then get feedback as to what other members perceive. Process the information in light of similarities and differences in perceptions seeking to build self-esteem since each of the descriptions can be construed as complimentary. Also, help members create composite personality sketches by combining traits and integrating self and other perceptions.

1. Put a check mark in column **one** after the three characteristics you feel describe the general type of personality you portray most of the time as a group leader.
2. After doing the above place the first name of each of the other members of your group in one of the other columns. Then check the three characteristics you think best describe each of them as group leaders.

	ONE (self)							
gentle								
gracious								
agreeable								
understanding								
considerate								
calm								
soft-spoken								
reserved								
quite								
sincere								
warm								
sweet								
cheerful								
carefree								
confident								
witty								
decisive								
dominant								
intellectual								
serious								
dignified								
mature								
animated								
enthusiastic								
outgoing								
radiant								
vivacious								

3. Share perceptions in the group giving an explanation for each rating.

Figure 6.4. Personality inventory analysis.

Nature of Leadership
(adapted from Johnson and Johnson, 1982, pp. 36-39)

The nature of group leadership can be summarized in two key polarity perspectives. The first is "Leaders make the group vs the group makes the leader." In this perspective the leader is either considered to be the one who controls the fortunes of the group or the leader is a pawn in the hands of the group which controls its own fortune. The second is "Leaders are born, not made vs leaders are made not born." This perspective contrasts innate ability of the leader with learned ability as the key to effective leadership. Assign half the group one side of each polarity and the other half the other side. Mix polarity sides so that one fourth of the class represents each possible combination. Give each person time to develop his or her thinking and arguments relative to assigned positions. Then break the class down into dyads based on opposing perspectives on the leader control issue. Have partners try to convince each other of their reasoning. After ten minutes change dyads forming partners of contrasting positions on the leaders are born vs made issue. Repeat the process of convincing each other of the merits of their positions. As a final activity, create groups of four representing the four combination perspectives. Each person in the group presents his or her perspective in a three minute presentation. When all have presented the group is to discuss merits of the various perspectives and come up with a group view which each group in turn presents to the class. This activity tends to elicit many tangential issues relative to group leadership that may be valuable to pursue.

Analysis of Group Skills

The form in Figure 6.5 is useful in helping prospective group leaders assess their attitudes and behaviors in the group and determine goals for themselves with respect to improving skills. Items may be added or changed to depict any of the skill areas described earlier in the chapter.

This form is to help you think about your attitudes and behavior in groups.

DIRECTIONS:

1. For each item, circle a number along the 5-point scale that fits you best.
2. When you have completed all the items, go back and star the three or four scales on which you would like most to change.
3. Draw an arrow (← or →) to show which direction you want to change.
4. Select one group skill (from the 3 or 4 starred items) that you would be most willing to work on during this class.
5. Write a contract with yourself to improve this behavior or skill. In the contract, identify specific behaviors that you would like to develop. This contract will be re-negotitated periodically throughout this class.

a. Ability to listen to others in an alert and understanding way

Very poor 1 2 3 4 5 Very high

b. Ability to express ideas and thoughts clearly

Very poor 1 2 3 4 5 Very high

c. Willingness to tell others what I feel

Conceal everything 1 2 3 4 5 Reveal everything

d. Willingness to accept direction from others

Usually unwilling 1 2 3 4 5 Very willing

e. Tendency to "take over" and dominate a group

Don't ever try 1 2 3 4 5 Try very hard

Figure 6.5. Analysis of group skills.

Figure 6.5. Continued.

f. Reactions to comments about my behavior

Ignore them 1 2 3 4 5 Consider them, take them

g. Understanding why I do what I do in groups (insight)

Don't usually know 1 2 3 4 5 Understand very well

h. Reaction to conflict and expressions of anger in a group

Become immobiled and ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Become stimulated and more effective

i. Reaction to expressions of affection and warmth in a group

Become immobilized and ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Become stimulated and more effective

j. Tolerance for opinions and viewpoints different from my own.

Very low 1 2 3 4 5 Very high

k. Ability to lead in a group

Very low 1 2 3 4 5 Very high

Problems Leading Groups

This activity is useful in eliciting discussion of leadership problems in supervision. Pass out 3 x 5 cards and have each group leader describe a problem he or she is having as a group leader. The cards are placed in the center of the table and each person draws a problem making sure it is not his or her own. Each person reads the problem to the group, discusses it, and makes suggestions as to how he or she might deal with it. The group then discusses the problem sharing ideas and perceptions. Repeat the process until all problems have been addressed.

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Chapter 7

GROUP MEMBER

NATURE, ROLES, AND BEHAVIORS

The most valuable resources a counseling group has at its disposal are its members. The members are crucial to the success of the group, and it is imperative that group leaders understand group members and their behavior. Of primary importance is the relationship of each member to the group. The individual decisions of members regarding their own involvement determines the impact of the group as a therapeutic tool for solving problems. Each member has to decide whether he or she is in the group to relate to others with mutual respect and personal self-reference or for exploitation. "The group is completely dependent upon the decision and capacity of each person to share his self-perceptions and to encourage others to do the same" (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, p. 74). Even when a positive commitment is made to become involved, however, problems created by group membership are many.

The fact that counselors must work with a group of clients at one time creates a number of problems for both the leader and members. Lakin (n.d.) enumerates several of these problems. (1) A basic problem of control occurs because the leader is not always able to stay on top of the process, and members are not always sure of the authority structure. (2) The issue of responsibility is clouded. Throughout the group process members and the leader engage in a jousting contest over the nature and allocation of responsibility. (3) Although closeness and cohesiveness are continually developing as a group matures, the extent of that closeness is difficult to define for group members. Intimacy is still primarily a dyadic quality, and therefore group relationships have more social attributes than affectional qualities. The problem, however, is knowing where to draw the line. (4) Even though direct communication in counseling groups perpetuates the helping process, that communication is sometimes difficult to follow. The multiplicity of member actions and reactions gives members and the leader a vast amount of input to comprehend. (5) The numerical superiority of members creates a competitive possibility that challenges the expertise and leadership of the counselor directly and indirectly.

The leader must be able to cope with each of these situations and adequately deal with them for the good of the group. Understanding the dynamics of member behavior can provide a solid foundation for doing so. The purpose of this chapter is to consider the various aspects of group membership of which a group leader needs to be aware. Topics covered will include the nature, roles, and behaviors of group members.

NATURE OF THE GROUP MEMBER

The group member is really a unique form of client. This is so because each one brings to counseling all the individuality that personality differences allow for, and each one must learn to cope with and make use of both the counselor and the group process. This combination of personal diversity and the task of functioning adequately as a client in a group gives the group member a quality that is not characteristic of clients in individual counseling or consulting relationships or even in marital/family counseling where each client's place is circumscribed by a pre-existing relational unit.

Just as in leadership, the key factor in membership is personality. Those various and sundry characteristics clients manifest in their personal lives are part and parcel of the group process, weaving an intricate pattern in each group that can never be replicated or even simulated in another group. This attribute makes group counseling the dynamic process it is and makes every group a new and challenging experience to the sensitive and aware group leader.

No such thing as an ideal group member exists, however patterns do lend themselves to effective functioning in group counseling. To enumerate all the personality traits that are conducive to good group membership would be an impossible task. However, one general characteristic appears to be mandatory. The effective group member must be able to relate fairly well in a small group situation. This rather simple social criterion is essential for both the person to benefit and the process to work. Clients who are antisocial, severely shy, or withdrawn don't have the social ability to function in groups. Other extremes in personality dynamics such as hostility, narcissism, depression, psychosis, total non-compliance and borderline features may also mitigate against group participation (Jacobs, Harvill and Masson, 1988; Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988; and Yalom, 1985). Such clients are best worked with individually or referred to professional resources for intensive treatment including therapy groups designed specifically for severely dysfunctional clients. However, if the client can function at a minimal level of effectiveness in a small group, all other personality traits that may disrupt or impede the group process and the individual's growth can be worked with to some degree, as the remainder of this chapter will show.

The basic criteria for determining "minimal group effectiveness is the client's responsiveness to the leader and other members as noted in the screening interview and the first few group sessions. If evidence exists of interactive qualities in the person that (1) enable a process of give and take to occur, (2) demonstrate a degree of interpersonal initiative, and (3) indicate awareness of the interpersonal influence of others, the probability of adjusting to the group is increased.

Beyond the individual differences and the group adaptability requirement, group members have several other factors in common. These factors define the general nature of the group member. As we've already discussed, all human beings have the same essential needs that motivate their behaviors and direct their courses of action. In most cases typical group members are experiencing deprivation in meeting some of these needs. Therefore they tend to be wary of any procedure that purports to meet their needs when they have not been able to do so themselves. Although naturally wary of the group, most members also experience a hope (usually unexpressed and secret in the initial stages of the group) that the group can be a place where they can find fulfillment and learn the means of satisfying their needs.

Since most of our human needs are met through the process of social interaction and relationship formation, the typical group member is usually experiencing difficulties in relating to others. This difficulty may be with one or two specific relationships or relationships in general, encompassing peer, family, work, and school associations. Due to the existence of these inherent relational difficulties in the individual member's lives, each person tends to be hesitant to interact unreservedly in initial group sessions for fear that relational difficulties will also emerge there. Most group members would like to interact amiably, freely, and personally in the group, but this desire is normally camouflaged by caution.

The character of group members relational problems are described categorically by the *Interpersonal Problem Matrix* depicted in Figure 7.1. While this schemata is useful in delineating the nature of the group relative to focus, content, membership and level of therapeutic intervention, it is included here to explicate the interpersonal difficulties group members bring into the group, Levels I and II are most relevant for our purposes (Trotzer, 1985).

The matrix is generated by intersecting three dynamic dimensions of interpersonal problems. Level I (horizontal axis), *Nature of Interpersonal Problems,* depicts four categories of interpersonal problems emphasizing the dynamics involved. These are a) problems forming relationships, b) problems maintaining relationships, c) problems changing relationships, and d) conflicts in relationships.

Level II (diagonal axis), *Interpersonal Problem Focus,* is divided into four broadly construed categories representing the basic relational domains in which we experience our interpersonal problems. These categories are a) interpersonal (social) skills, b) family relationships, c) peer relationships, and d) hierarchical relationships.

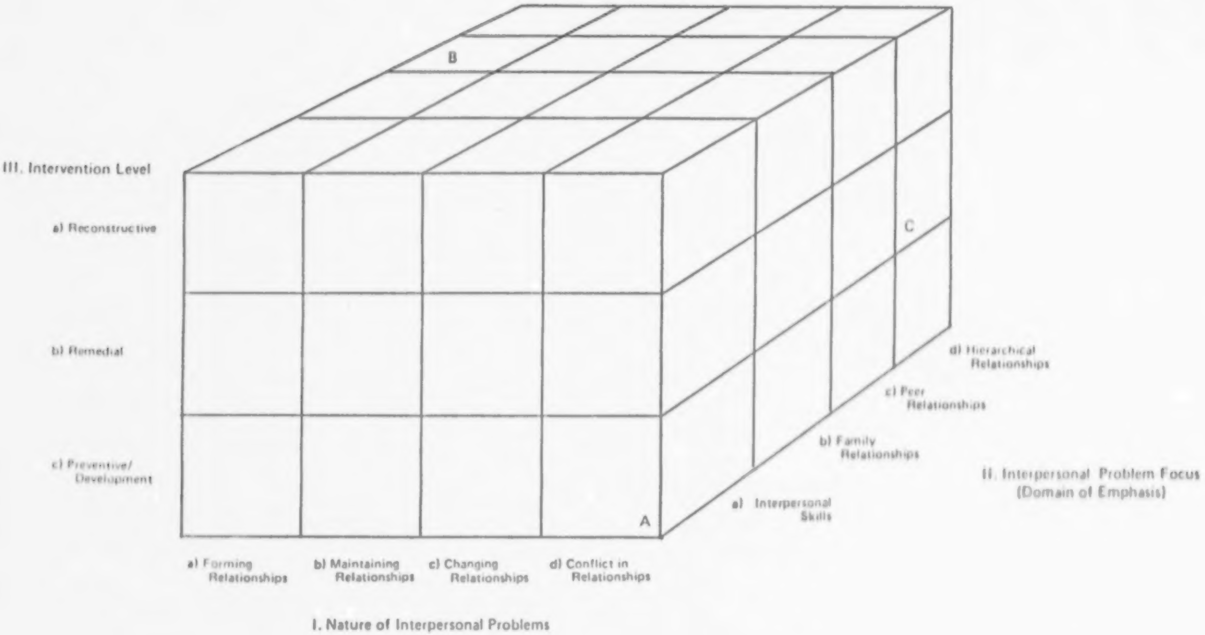
III. Intervention Level
a) Reconstructive
b) Remedial
c) Preventive/ Development
B
C
A
a) Forming Relationships
b) Maintaining Relationships
c) Changing Relationships
d) Conflict in Relationships
I. Nature of Interpersonal Problems
a) Interpersonal Skills
b) Family Relationships
c) Peer Relationships
d) Hierarchical Relationships
II. Interpersonal Problem Focus (Domain of Emphasis)

Figure 7.1. Trotzer's Interpersonal Problem Matrix.

Level III (vertical axis), *Intervention Level,* depicts the purpose of group counseling relative to the degree of difficulty or seriousness of the interpersonal problems and the intensity and timing of the intervention itself. The three categories are a) preventive/developmental—referring to the process of providing personally relevant information and skills in order to help clients prepare for, work through and/or circumvent typical interpersonal problems; b) remedial—referring to an interventive focus that is problem-specific and designed to resolve interpersonal concerns that are impeding growth and development of the individual; and c)reconstructive referring to a focus which is personality-specific and designed to help clients make extensive personal changes in order to improve their interpersonal effectiveness.

The interaction of these three vectors generates descriptive cubicles that suggest the general nature of relational problems, the domain in which problems occur and the basic character of the group process needed to rectify them. For example, the cube labeled "A" in Figure 7.1 represents a conflict/interpersonal skills/preventive interaction. Since we know that conflict in relationships is inevitable and actually a means by which relationships grow and develop, we can propose a counseling group which teaches conflict resolution skills as a preventive measure. Such a group would be relevant to any number of target populations. Cube "B" (Figure 7.1) is forming relationships/peers/reconstructive. An example of this cube would be a counseling group for individuals who are social isolates that is designed to help them form friendships. The group process would be extensive and intensive to enable the group members to make personal changes and acquire the interpersonal skills necessary to form friendships in their social network (peers). Cube "C" (Figure 7.1) is changing relationships/hierarchical/remedial. An example is group counseling for supervisors who had been promoted to positions of authority over former peers and who are struggling personally with this new relational pattern.

While the matrix does not produce mutually exclusive categories, nor cover all possible permutations of interpersonal problems, it is very useful in conceptualizing and planning group counseling with respect to relationship issues. Combined with a particular group model for structuring group counseling (e.g., Trotzer, 1979, 1980), it has considerable utility for addressing members' interpersonal concerns.

Beyond relationship difficuties specific problems also exist that bring each individual to group counseling in the first place. This then is another common characteristic of group members. All are in group counseling because they are experiencing a problem or problems that they have not been able to resolve satisfactorily on their own. The fact that they have problems and have indicated an inability to solve them is a duality that generates frustration and creates a natural defensiveness in a social milieu like the group. A basic assumption and expectation from both the client's and others' perspectives is that one should be able to handle one's own problems and that failure to do so means inadequacy, weakness, and lack of determination and drive. As a result, members generally experience a great deal of ambivalence when they enter group counseling. No matter how well prepared they are, when the group begins to interact most members experience an internal conflict between sharing themselves and their problems and retaining an aura of privacy and self-concealment.

Members experience this approach-avoidance conflict for a variety of reasons. They are not sure what others in the group will think if they reveal their problems. They are not sure of the nature of the group-counseling process itself, and they are not sure of themselves and their own role in the group. This being the case, the group is doomed to failure unless a trump card can be played that will tip the balance in favor of proceeding. That something extra can either be the personality of the leader, the internal emotional pressure created by the members' personal concerns, or the attraction of the group. The counselor who can obtain member confidence and is viewed as a caring, supportive, friendly, and helpful person is a vital force in securing commitment to group counseling on the part of members. On the basis of leader explanations beforehand and conduct during initial sessions, many members decide whether they will risk involvement.

Psychological turmoil is another factor that often influences members to commit themselves to group counseling. When the pain, frustration, or anxiety caused by a problem becomes great, the risk involved in sharing one's problem in the group becomes a lesser and often secondary consideration. The need to ventilate and obtain the group's help overcomes the fear of self-disclosure and the need to protect oneself. This motivation, however, often places individual members at-risk because they sacrifice their defenses for the sake of psychological relief thus becoming vulnerable. Therefore, the group atmosphere in general and actions of the group leader in particular must be such that the relief of pain incentive does not devastate the individual or undermine the group's development as an effective therapeutic process.

The attraction of the group is probably the most influential in convincing members to involve themselves in the group as a means of working on their problems. Cartwright (1951) stated that "the more attractive the group is to its members, the greater is the influence the group can exert on its members" (p. 388). Ohlsen (1970) affirmed this notion, calling the attraction of the group one of the key dynamic forces in its effectiveness. When the member is attracted to the group, the group becomes a setting where individual behavior can be affected (Fullmer, 1971). The group's attractiveness derives from many sources: the social nature of the process, the promise of personal need fulfillment, and the anticipation of help for one's problems. Whatever the reason, members react to the group's appeal by immersing themselves in the process.

The final common factor among most group-counseling members is a deep and sincere desire for success. This desire also tends to be covered by the defensive mechanisms of members as they enter into the nebulous domain of the group, but it is usually clearly revealed when an atmosphere of trust and safety is created. Even when obstacles to change seem insurmountable, people tend to retain a glimmer of hope that things will work out. Usually when this flickering flame of optimism is extinguished, group counseling loses its impact and more intensive psychotherapeutic treatment is required. At times, however, group counseling may have to rekindle that flame in some clients, which accounts for the overlap between counseling and psychotherapy mentioned in Chapter 2. But usually psychotherapy is not the focus of a counseling group.

ROLES OF THE GROUP MEMBER

The role of the group member is crucial to the effectiveness of the group because it establishes the group's focal point, as well as providing the therapeutic resources that can be used to help members with their concerns. The group member's role is really a composite of four roles: the client, the helper, the model, and the reality check. The ***client role*** is self-explanatory. It is that aspect of a member's involvement when the group is focusing on that individual's concerns. All members, with the possible exception of those who may be included as models, are in group counseling because they have problems. Therefore at some point they must assume the position of being helped in order to make effective use of the counseling process. Members who continually refuse to explore their concerns in the group deny the most vital component of their group membership and thus obstruct any efforts made to help them. Ohlsen, Horne and Lawe (1988) referred to these members as "nonclients" and Corey and Corey (1977) cited eight reasons that may explain such "nonparticipating behavior ." They are

1. the feeling that one doesn't have anything worthwhile to say,
2. the feeling that one shouldn't talk about oneself or that one should be seen and not heard,
3. fear of looking foolish; not knowing the appropriate thing to say or do,
4. fear of certain members in the group or of the authority of the group leader,
5. resistance, particularly if the person doesn't really want to be a member of the group,
6. uncertainty about how the group process works,
7. fear of being rejected or of being accepted, and
8. lack of trust in the group; fear of leaks of confidentiality. (p. 40)

These reasons should be explored in the group. However, members who relentlessly function in this manner should be asked to leave the group. They should be offered individual counseling, where there is no escaping the role of being the client.

The ***helper role*** has already been alluded to. One of the advantages of group counseling is that the member has the opportunity to be both the helper and the helped. In the helper role members seek to give assistance in whatever way possible to the member who happens to be working on a problem. This assistance may take the form of listening, sharing, giving feedback, suggesting alternatives, confronting, or participating in group activities such as role playing. The helper role has a real therapeutic impact on the client being helped and on the helper. The client values the help received because it originates from peers. For helpers the opportunity to be of assistance builds self-confidence and self-esteem. It provides them with an "other" perspective, which takes their minds off their own concerns temporarily and restores a psychological balance. Each helper adds a dimension to the counselor and the group and increases the group's resources in a geometric progression because of the subsequent interaction between unique member personalities. The more willing, creative, and effective the helper is, the more efficient the group process will be. Members who refuse to show concern for others in the group and fail to function in a helping capacity risk not getting the group's help when they need it. In addition, some members resist giving up the client role, selfishly demanding the group's help and attention. They are inconsiderate of other members' needs in this regard and must be helped to realize that their function as helpers in the group is equally important to their client role.

The group member is in a ***model role*** as well as observing others. Dustin and George (1973) pointed out that group members offer a great number of models and sources of reinforcement. This behavioral learning dynamic functions in the group to help members learn socially adaptive behaviors and skills by emulating fellow members who already exhibit them. The variety of personal attributes among group members accounts for many modeling opportunities during counseling. Some members may be models because of their verbal skills, others because of their personal attractiveness, social skills, or intellectual abilities. Sometimes leaders include members in the group simply to serve as models. For example, sociometric stars and isolates are placed together in the same group with the intent being that the isolates will identify with and pattern their behavior after the socially effective stars. Always a good idea is to know the particular area in which each group member can serve as a model so that modeling may be utilized appropriately. Being a model also gives members feelings of worth and helps them learn responsibility.

Besides demonstrating relevant adaptive behavior as models, group members also represent the society outside the group. As such they function as a ***reality check,*** helping other members assess their concerns in light of realistic criteria and select alternatives that have a reasonable chance of working. This role is part of the group's "society in microcosm" characteristic and functions effectively only when members do not deny reality, distort their perceptions, or hesitate to express honest opinions out of fear of or sympathy for the member whose problem is being discussed. This aspect of the member role has tremendous vitality because no matter what the circumstances or setting the group is in, members usually know what is necessary to adapt themselves constructively. The problem is that they are not always willing to admit it. Thus the leader must see that members handle this role responsibly and to the benefit of the group and its members.

All the members will demonstrate strengths in certain of these roles and weaknesses in others. But at some time during the group process all members must portray each of these four roles to some degree if the group is to maintain mutual responsibility and commitment.

BEHAVIORS OF THE GROUP MEMBER

Group members exhibit many kinds of behavior in the group. These behaviors are the material with which the group and the leader must work in accomplishing purposes of the group and in helping individual members resolve their problems. Five categories of member behavior will be discussed here: resisting behaviors, manipulating behaviors, helping behaviors, emotional behaviors, and subgrouping behaviors. Effectively understanding these behaviors will make dealing with them an easier task.

Resisting Behaviors

Resistance is perhaps the biggest nemesis the group counselor faces in the effort to develop a therapeutic milieu. The source of this resistance is within members themselves. Resistance is usually more blatant during early stages of the group and tends to become more subtle and potentially destructive during the later stages. Ohlsen, Horne, and Lawe (1988) describe resistance as the failure to cooperate in the therapeutic process or the blocking of another client's treatment in the group. Members resist the group process for many reasons. They fear that other members will not accept them if they disclose their problems. They worry that if they share one problem it will lead to others, creating a snowballing effect that they cannot control. Some members resist because they are not willing to suffer the pain involved in solving their problems, and others resist simply because they feel incapable of making changes or achieving their goals.

Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) pointed out that resistance to personal explorations is particularly evident during early sessions when trust and cohesiveness are minimal. This social resistance is common in most new social environments. Social resistance is the most easily overcome because once common ground is established, rapport develops quickly and the foundational elements of a sharing relationship are formed. Resistance later on in the group when members are confronting their problems becomes a more individualized resistance to taking the steps necessary to work out problems. This form of resistance is sometimes very difficult to detect and must be watched for closely by both members and the leader.

Ohlsen (1970) gave four reasons for discouraging resistance in any form. (1) Resistance increases the possibility that confidentiality will be broken. Members who do not commit themselves personally to the group are much more apt to divulge proceedings to outsiders. (2) Resistance increases the amount of acting-out behavior. Members who have no ties to the group have less to risk and therefore are more willing to engage in overt disruptive behavior in order to escape from group pressure or protect themselves against involvement. (3) Resistance encourages members to be dependent on each other for meaningful relationships rather than working on improving their lives. Members may resist making changes in order to turn the group into a permanent social gang rather than the temporary therapeutic group it is supposed to be. (4)

Resistance helps members escape responsibility for coping with their unwillingness to cooperate in the group process. If members never have to face up to their resistant behavior, they will not have to confront the painful areas of their lives nor will they have to expend the energy necessary to change.

Overcoming resistance is a ticklish issue but one that must be faced. Social resistance during the early stages of the group is best handled by methods characterized by warmth and acceptance. Establishing a common ground of experience through group activities or sharing here-and-now feelings about the group tend to be very effective. For the more complex and serious forms of individual resistance, the possibilities are not so well defined nor is effectiveness assured. Ohlsen (1970) noted that two common techniques used to cope with resistance are interpretation and confrontation. He added, however, that both are questionable because "interpretation tends to encourage intellectualization and to make clients dependent" and confrontation places members on the hot seat where "the full therapeutic impact of the group is no longer felt continuously by the client" (p. 138). Both of these techniques, however, do have utility once a solid relationship of trust and acceptance is established between members. If interpretation is used prior to a good relationship being formed, members may resent the intrusion into their privacy and become even more resistant. However, interpretation at the proper time and stated in a tentative manner can be very helpful. The same is true of confrontation. Often at the point where individual members are resisting, a well-timed confrontation can have a meaningful result. This is especially true if the confrontation is generated by group members who have already clearly demonstrated their acceptance and caring for the individual being confronted.

Ohlsen (1970) pointed out another appropriate method of coping with resistance. He used the screening interview as a means of preventing resistance by turning responsibility for convincing the counselor of readiness for group counseling over to the prospective client.

> Giving clients responsibility for convincing the counselor that they are ready for group counseling, and they are committed to its purposes and to achievement of their own individual goals, and that they will develop and maintain a therapeutic climate enables them to accept

> considerable responsibility for their own growth. Within such a climate, clients tend to perceive resistance as deviant behavior. (p. 120)

Resistance is portrayed in many different ways, but whatever its behavioral manifestation the objectives of protecting oneself and preventing contact remains the same. Some of the more common resisting behaviors are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Monopolizing. There are many descriptions of monopolizing group members. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) described them as persons who must hold the group's attention and who become anxious when the focal point shifts to another member. They said this type of behavior is a defensive overreaction to fear of attack or isolation from the group. Ohlsen (1970) said the monopolist "does seem to be a self-centered recognition-seeker who tries to maintain a place for himself in the center of the stage" (p. 188). Kranzow (1973) stated simply that a monopolist dominates group discussion. A monopolizing member stymies group interaction because other members do not get the opportunity to react or to present their own concerns and points of view. This form of resistance also can create many negative, unexpressed feelings in group members. They dislike having one person monopolize the discussion but do not have the courage or opportunity to take the floor themselves. They therefore internalize their feelings and express them through nonverbal reactions or behind-the-back comments outside the group. The leader should tune in to these nonverbal reactions drawing the members out and helping them express their feelings. This will curtail out-of-group comments and also may help monopoloists see that they are generating negative attitudes toward themselves.

The group members may unwittingly reinforce monopolizing behavior by expecting the monopolist to take over in periods of ambiguity and tension. Members can develop a subconscious dependence on this type of group member to take over, so even though they do not particularly relish the idea of a one person show, they do nothing to prevent it. Monopolists also provide a handy excuse for other group members not to reveal themselves. Thus even when a monopolizing person desires to change, expectations are such that he or she will receive little support for not monopolizing. This situation may have to be pointed out to the group from time to time in order to help the group understand and cope with all the dynamics of monopolizing.

Monopolists are often not aware of their behavior and may actually feel that they are behaving correctly. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) stated,

> Even when an individual is revealing what appears to be significant aspects of self, he may be either consciously or unconsciously trying to control the group's potential impact on him. As long as an individual is speaking he holds the group's attention, prevents interaction, and minimizes the probability of being confronted by another group member. (p. 20)

Monopolists tend to be very verbal and therefore initially can put everyone at ease, including the leader. Once monopolists are established the only way to unseat them is through some form of confrontation, which may reverberate in negative repercussions throughout the group process. Therefore a necessity is to identify this behavior early and to act to create a more balanced pattern of communication characterized by total member participation. Yalom (1985) noted that the key to dealing with monopolizing members is not to silence them. "You do not want to hear less from (them); instead, you want to hear more" (p. 378). The message to be conveyed to monopolizers is that you want to hear more meaningful disclosures. If, however, monopolists persist, they may need to be offered individual counseling as a substitute until they can function more effectively in the group.

Hostility. Hostile members exhibit a form of resistance that is difficult to work with because very few avenues of approach are open to the group for making personal contact and gaining trust and confidence. Hostility is usually the result of being hurt, let down, or abandoned by someone whose love and acceptance were needed. On the basis of this experience the hostile person no longer expects to be accepted or loved and therefore tends to be demanding, brutal, sullen, and defiant. Detection of hostility is as much an emotional process as it is a behavioral one. Hostile clients tend to generate visceral reactions of fear, edginess, tension, and even anxiety in those around them. Thus other members attempt to either avoid or placate them, both reactions that interfere with constructive group interaction.

Hostile clients require infinite patience tempered with firmness and caring. They must be given an open invitation to let down defenses and join the group on a personal level and must be made aware that the group understands how difficult that may be. On the other hand hostile members must not be allowed to control the group by attitudes and behavior. In fact, if the group can become involved in personal, warm, trusting, accepting interaction in spite of the hostility, it may convince hostile members of the group's sincerity. Reflection and empathic understanding are the best methods of approach, (Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988), and confrontation is the most dangerous because it only gives the hostile member a good reason to fight back under the pretense of being attacked. If members can convice hostile clients that they really care and make good on their commitments, these clients can be worked with.

Silence. Silent periods and silent members usually cause feelings of uneasiness, tension, or consternation in the group. But a distinction must be made between silence that is constructive and silence that is resistant and destructive. A warm and accepting silence that gives individuals time to think is useful in the group. This type of silence can be a motivating factor when the ambiguity it creates results in tension that influences members to share themselves or their feelings in a personally relevant way. Similarly, some group members can become deeply involved in the group interaction even though they do a minimum of talking. These members may in fact use silence as a means of removing defenses and with time the effect becomes evident. Other members usually are quite adept at recognizing this type of silent member.

A destructive silence generally results in tension and anxiety in the group that interferes with effective action. It is motivated by fear of self-disclosure and elements of confusion and insecurity. It is an effective, resisting behavior because it places the responsibility and pressure on other members or the leader to carry on the group process while at the same time protecting the individual from self-revelation. Hinckley and

Herman (1951) indicated that silence may mean (1) members are holding back as a punitive measure against the leader or certain members, (2) members are avoiding reality and/or escaping conflict, (3) a particular client is hiding, or (4) certain members have difficulty in communicating with others. In some cases individual members are silent because they do not get the opportunity to talk, are not assertive in speaking out, or simply do not want to interrupt. In other cases cultural factors may account for silence (Ho, 1984; Ipaye, 1982; and Kaneshige, 1973). For example, Native Americans and oriental clients may view silence as a mark of respect rather than as resistance. Lifton (1966) added that silence may be a reaction of shock or support. Personality traits that tend toward quietness in social situations and verbal patterns that are deliberate and slow paced also contribute to silence in individual members.

In dealing with group silence the leader must develop an ability to determine the tolerance level of members and the point at which the ambiguity is no longer producing therapeutic results. At this point intervention is appropriate either in the form of initiating a group activity, reflecting the leader's own feelings, reflecting the leader's perception of the group atmosphere, or asking a leading question. Often this type of intervention is greeted with spontaneous relief by the members who then assert themselves verbally in an effort to purge their anxious feelings and prevent the recurrence of that type of silence.

Individual silent members must be encouraged to talk but not necessarily put on the spot to do so. Opportunities can be provided to them in the form of go-rounds or questions directed to the group so that the silent member's participation is in the context of just another perspective. Responding to nonverbal cues that indicate the silent member is thinking, feeling, reacting, or about to say something also can facilitate participation. Simple statements like "Cheryl, you seemed to be thinking about something just now, and I wonder if you could share it with us?" or "Daniel, you seemed to react to what Jack just said; could you explain what you felt?" Note the tentative nature of these statements. Too forceful or too direct statements may increase resistance. Always give the silent client an option rather than forcing the issue. Response to nonverbal cues is an important skill to develop in working with silences or silent members. This skill is not only important for the leader to develop but for members to master as well.

Withdrawal. Withdrawal and silence tend to go hand in hand, but silence is not necessarily indicative of withdrawal. Withdrawal is usually associated with a negative self-concept. Group members may resist involvement by maintaining or encouraging social distance between themselves and the group. This may be communicated by a member actually placing his or her chair apart from the group or sitting in a manner which creates physical barriers or distance between self and the group. The member may take on the role of an isolate in the group, maintain an observer posture, or resist involvement by criticizing what is going on, either verbally or nonverbally (Kranzow, 1973). Withdrawal tends to be an obvious challenge to group members to demonstrate their care and concern by making a supreme effort to bring the person into the group, or it enables members to resist having to reveal and work on their problems in the group. The withdrawn member, however, usually does not cut off all communication with the group. In fact, often while seeming withdrawn, the person is actually listening intensely. To work effectively with withdrawal, an avenue must be located and used to expand the withdrawn member's participation in the group. Many of the same techniques used in silence are relevant for withdrawal, and in certain cases confrontation is also useful, especially if the member does not know how to ask for the group's help.

Absences. One of the easiest ways to avoid involvement in the group and resist its therapeutic impact is to simply not show up for the group meeting. Absences early in the group process may indicate members' lack of interest, lack of commitment, or fear of the unknown. If the group process is not clearly explained, and if a commitment to participate is not obtained beforehand, absences can be expected. Later in the process absences take on a different meaning. Hinckley and Herman (1951) stated that members may use absence as a means of testing the limits of acceptance in the group and to determine their status. Johnson (1963) added that as a group develops and members sense that subsequent interaction may penetrate into areas that are frightening, potentially harmful, or embarrassing, they may use absence as a means of resistance and escape.

The peculiar aspect about absence is that being "out of sight" does not mean being "out of mind" as far as other group members are concerned. A natural tendency is for the group to discuss absent members, especially if other members have feelings they will not express when the absent ones are there. This may itself be a form of resistance, and the leader must see to it that the group does not use it to avoid confronting their own concerns. On the other hand, this can be an opportunity for members to work with their feelings in preparation for constructively dealing with the absentee. Often when members find out about the tendency to discuss the absentee, they will make more concerted efforts to attend the group sessions rather than risk being talked about.

Absence can be handled by simply contacting the absentee in a nonconfrontative manner to demonstrate concern. At the same time, the responsibility issue can be stressed. Once clients have indicated they will be in the group, they have an obligation to themselves and other members to be there. Of course, a positive group relationship and climate reduces absences. In cases where absence is obviously an effort to avoid responsibility for one's problems, confrontation may be called for.

Intellectualizing. Probably the most uncomplimentary label that has developed in the annals of group work is *intellectualizing;* no more negative charge can be leveled at a group member. Intellectualizing basically implies that members are not personally involved and are using the cognitive domain as a shield. Because of the exaggerated overtones of this term, its real meaning has been distorted. Its connotations are more feared though much less distinct and less understood than the denotative qualities of the term. As a result, members and leaders hesitate to point it out when it occurs because of the strong reaction that might be stimulated.

Intellectualizing is nevertheless a very common resistance mechanism in the group. Most members realize that discussing a topic is easier that talking about themselves. They also know that interacting in discussions is easier when devoid of emotional qualities and personal implications. They prefer to discuss how they got to be like they are (there-and-then), or what they would like to be (if-and-when), rather than become involved in a discussion of their present feelings, behaviors, and problems (here-and-now). Whenever verbalizations take on qualities that move the focus away from the person to a topic, event, situation, or issue that has little relevance to the group or its members' problems, intellectualizing is occurring. This does not mean these discussions are uninteresting or unemotional. In fact, the contrary is quite often the case. But the point is that the work of the group is not being attended to.

The best safeguard against intellectualizing is to encourage members always to relate their discussion directly to themselves and to keep the focus within the group rather than outside the group. Intellectualizing is often a means of keeping the group going to avoid silence or keeping the leader happy, especially when members are not sure of the group's purposes. Clear and specific goals can help circumvent this problem so that members can address themselves to communication that is personally meaningful and facilitative of group progress. In addition, helping members personalize their comments through reflection, restatement, clarification, modeling, tone setting, and probing can prevent intellectualizing from impeding group progress. Poppen and Thompson (1974) described the nature of nonintellectualizing communication: "Talking about something one of the group members likes becomes more meaningful when he describes his complete feelings about it, indicates how important its value is to him, or states how he acts in accordance with this value" (p. 96). The purpose of working with intellectualizing is not to eliminate thinking from the group process. It is to make the cognitive process a resource to the person in working out problems rather than a wall to hide behind.

The Old Pro. As more and more individuals have experienced involvement in small-group interaction of a therapeutic nature, a new resistant phenomenon has emerged—the "old pro" syndrome. Increasingly likely is that membership in any particular counseling group will include one or several members who have had previous small-group experience. Accordingly, an experiential differentiation exists between members that can be used by the more experienced member to avoid personal involvement. The old pros manifest themselves in a variety of ways. They may exude a sophistication that is read as "I know what this is all about and it doesn't threaten me a bit." They may make numerous references to their previous group experience to solidify their position, impress other members or the leader, justify their actions in the group, or indicate they have less need for help than the others. A common reaction of the old pro is to become "Mr. Co-counselor," to minimize personal involvement by using leadership techniques (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971). This type of member also may begin to share seemingly personal information early in the group, which turns out to be a rehash of what they have already said or dealt with in previous group experiences.

Old pros have the potential of being helpful or detrimental influences in the group. If the leader can help them model effective membership behaviors to help other members overcome fear and distrust of the group, they can be tremendous assets. In fact, this type of person may be able to accommodate very well to functioning as a leader in the peer-facilitated groups described in Chapter 8. However, remember that this member's first purpose is to work on personal concerns. If past experience is being used to avoid that purpose, it must be dealt with immediately.

Experienced members can generate negative feelings in other members who resent their "superiority." Old pros also may engage in advice-giving, which can be disturbing to other members and is in itself a form of resistance. Powdermaker and Frank (1953) explained that giving advice diverts attention away from one's own problems, exhibits superiority to others in the group, and may conceal contempt and hostility for the one seeking assistance. Finally, the old pro also may attempt to become the group's superego, the one who keeps telling the group what it should or should not do (Kranzow, 1973). This type of member may represent a direct challenge to the leader and a divisive threat to the group process. For all these reasons old pros must be dealt with as quickly as possible to prevent problems.

But oddly enough often the group leader fails to spot the old pro before some damage has already occurred. Leaders wanting to facilitate a positive group experience may be extremely appreciative and condoning of the behavior of the old pro initially. As a result this person becomes firmly entrenched in that role before the group leader realizes it. Therefore several precautions should be taken. Placing experienced members together in a group counters using their experience as a resistant tool because they can keep a check on each other. An individual interview with the experienced member before or during the group to point out the member's position, enlist cooperation, and reaffirming the basic purpose for being in the group may be all that is needed. During group sessions, probing and questioning the old pro may be effective, and drawing out other members' feelings in the form of feedback to the experienced member is invaluable. Remember though that the "old pro" image may be no more than a facade with very little solid basis. If confronted too strongly such a person may become confused, hurt, and even devastated. Feedback therefore should help them realize what they are doing and amply encourage them to continue to function in a helping capacity with other members. The difference between advice and assistance can be pointed out, along with reinforcement for suggesting alternatives and not for telling members which alternative to choose.

The Joker. Humor is probably the least offensive form of resistance in the group. The member who can get the group laughing helps relieve strain and tension and removes some of the pain of considering problems. The humor also calls attention to the person but often at the cost of serious consideration of certain necessary and personal factors. The joker has a lot of group support because group members tend to associate laughter with happiness, and certainly no one should be criticized for making others happy. Therefore the joker has a natural defense alliance that is difficult to penetrate, especially early in the group. Unfortunately, the joker's problems are usually so well camouflaged in joviality that other members seldom take them seriously. The group may look to the joker to lighten things up when interaction gets too heavy, so that member has difficulty getting help from the group and, at the same time, feels obligated to be the group's court jester.

The most effective way of coping with humorists is through reflection of the underlying serious aspects of their communication. To be able to laugh with them and yet respond to them seriously and personally will not only help them overcome the use of humor for resistance but also will help other members see them in a different perspective.

The Housekeeper. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) described this resistant member as the person who is doing everything for the group except participating in it. Housekeepers set up the room, get extra chairs, pass out materials, and generally take care of any possible technical aspects of the group. They are especially adept at running errands. They associate with the group but don't involve themselves in the interaction. Reinforcement of their participation and control of the amount of chores they do will help this type of member make use of group. Encourage self-disclosure and feedback. In this way housekeepers feel useful to the group but become more involved with it because they engage in give-and-take discussion with the members on a personal level.

The Help-Rejecting Complainer. Yalom (1985) has identified the help-rejecting complainer (HRC) as one of the most frustrating resistive group members. A sub-category of the monopolizer, the HRC is a discloser, but not a closer. This type of member holds the focus of the group with an unending litany of complaints or problems which by definition are insolvable. No matter how understanding the group is, catharsis does not generate a shift in emphasis and no matter what the group suggests, an obstacle always is present. HRC's are master "yes-butters" and their standard response is often "I tried that and it didn't work."

The HRC is almost completely self centered and has difficulty tolerating anyone else being in the limelight. They solidify their position in the group early because of their seeming willingness to discuss their problems, but that's as far as they go. As the group continues they generate an underlying tension in the group which manifests itself as irritability, frustration, and anger either stifled or expressed impulsively as group members struggle with the discomfort of dealing with the HRC.

One of the more common interactions that emerge in the group is when an HRC and an "advice-giver" lock horns. Since both members are engaging in nonproductive group behavior, the tension level in the group escalates. This tension can be used constructively if the leader or other group members can shift the focus from content (the topic of the interaction) to process (what's happening in the group). This detatches the group from the grip of the HRC and gives opportunity to look directly at the behavior and impact of the person in the group.

The key to coping with an HRC is not buying in emotionally to the plight of that member's life. Instead, focus on process zeroing in on how the person is coming across, soliciting feedback about the behavior manifested in the group rather than trying to solve the problems being described in the HCR's discourse. Additional measures are limit setting where specific boundaries are established around how much group time the HRC can use for themselves and paradox where the leader goes with the flow overstating the insolubility of the HRC's problems. Both of these methods made use of boundaries to generate change in behavior. In the first case, boundaries are set and adhered to placing the responsibility for staying within them on the HRC, while in the second case the HRC'S own boundaries are breached creating the reactive initiative to change behavior to regain a sense of being in control.

Since a common dynamic of HRC behavior is "to frustrate and defeat the group and the therapist" (Yalom, 1985, p. 391), mobilizing group resources to address the problem is vitally important. If the group is not stimulated to respond constructively, neither the group nor the individual will realize the therapeutic potential of the group process.

The Self-Righteous Moralist. Another resistant group behavior pattern identified by Yalom (1985) is the self-righteous moralist (SRM). "The most outstanding characteristic of the self-righteous moralist is the need to be right and to demonstrate that the other person is wrong" (Yalom, 1985, pp. 392-93). The critical distinction here is not that the member is secure in his or her own values and lives up to them irrespective of circumstances or negative repercussions—a quality that generally garners respect even from those whose values differ. Rather, the SRM's mission is to be right and superior to other's to the point where what others think or feel about him or her is unimportant. Their security is based totally on personal ascendence which has the tendency to generate intense resentment in other group members. This reaction develops quickly and locks the SRM into a role that is almost impossible to escape. Members no longer see the SRM as a person because every comment they make generates a negative emotional reaction even among members who may generally espouse the same values.

Yalom (1985) identified the dynamic of shame as the force that undergirds the SRM's behavior. Due to feelings of inferiority stemming from lack of success or recognition, the SRM seeks superiority on the basis of "mobility of character rather than achievements" (Yalom, 1985, p. 393). Another dynamic of the SRM's behavior is projection. Often the SRM takes an uncompromising stand on things that internally stem from a distinct sense of vulnerability. They believe and feel that if they don't take an absolute position and hold it, the next step is to be totally consumed by the very thing they are so against. This facet becomes especially evident when issues such as sex and alcohol or character traits such as honesty and fidelity arise in group discussions.

Given the fragility of their shame based defensive mechanisms, their intrinsic fear of vulnerability and the group's emotional reactivity, dealing with the SRM is an extremely delicate and often unsuccessful process. Once again separating content from process is recommended because it takes the focus off of the topic upon which the SRM solidifies his or her position and places it on the person. However, because the importance of others is often disregarded by the SRM, very little leverage can be generated from group dynamics. Confrontation places the SRM at risk due to the brittle nature of their defenses. More often than not the SRM is ostracized rather than worked with. However, if group members feelings can be processed sufficiently to the point where the group can endure or even benevolently tolerate the SRM's participation, over time he or she may be able to risk (experiment with) softening the stance and learn a more flexible mode of interpersonal relating that begins to reconstruct the basis of achieving a sense of self esteem.

The Rescuer. One of the more subtle resisting behavior patterns is the "rescuer" (Jacobs, Harvill, & Masson, 1988). The rescuer is mobilized into action whenever negative intensity arises in the group. Rather than face and work through negative affect, the rescuer rushes to the aid of the upset member via smoothing, reassurance, and sympathy. They engage in what Corey and Corey (1977) called "band-aiding" behavior by which they try to turn the focus from pain to feeling better without addressing the basis or cause of the distress. They patronize rather than support and try to raise the level of interaction from personal to social.

Rescuers can be helped to understand and change their behavior by processing their actions after an incident of rescuing occurs. They also can be trained via modeling and direct teaching how to respond empathetically rather than sympathetically. At critical times their rescuing attempts can be blocked or diverted so that therapeutic business can be attended to. Most important is to work on facilitating self-disclosure by "rescuers" so that they can experience first hand the helping process and then translate it into use with others. In most cases a "rescuer" can be transformed into a vital helping resource in the group.

Responding to Resisting Behaviors. Several basic strategies that pertain specifically to resisting behaviors are presented in a list that follows. They are identified in a general hierarchical order of preference from the perspective of (1) relevance and potential for effectiveness, (2) degree of seriousness with respect to the behavior, and (3) appropriateness with respect to timing (earlier vs later in the group process). The general rule of thumb to responding to any potentially detrimental group member behavior is based on a "for the good of the group" criteria. When any behavior persists to the extent that the therapeutic effectiveness of the group is jeopardized, action to deal with the behavior first as an ingroup task and second via removal of the member from the group must be initiated.

1. **Empathy:** first and foremost is the use of empathy as a means of dealing with resisting behaviors. Since most resistances are essentially defense strategies the impact of an empathic ear goes a long way in establishing a trust base which enables the group member to risk vulnerability. In fact, the more aggressive the resistance, the more potent accurate empathy becomes.

2. **Limit Setting:** this tool is especially appropriate for resisting behaviors that manifest themselves via garnering an inordinate amount of the group's time and attention. Placing limits on the amount of time a person can retain the group's attention and holding vigorously to those limits places the initiative for responsible group participation on the shoulders of the resistant member.

3. **Using Paradox:** based on the premise that resistance is a matter of gaining control, "going with" rather than blocking resisting behaviors creates a paradox where the group member gets more control, attention, and affirmation than he or she is comfortable with. This produces a reactive change in the direction of more appropriate boundaries both as a person and as a group participant.

4. **Contingency Contracting:** this strategy is particularly relevant to resisters who are big on the problem-sharing but come up short on problem-solving. Contract with the group member for time in the group based on action outside the group or behaviors/conditions inside the group. Such contracts may be in the simple form of a ratio of responding to others statements vs self statements. For example, 10 responsive statements must be made before one self statement can occur. Contingency contracting raises the issue of accountability both in and out of the group.

5. **Giving Responsibility:** in some cases resisting behaviors can be translated into effective group behaviors by assigning a resister responsibility to assist another person in the group. This technique is useful for resisters whose patterns of behavior are based on inferiority, low self-esteem, or lack of self-confidence. It is also helpful with members who have difficulty when the focus is not on themselves. It is guardedly appropriate for persons who resist involvement via patterns such as the "old pro".

6. **Confrontation:** confrontation whereby the behavior of the group member in the group is addressed on a here

and now process level is the ultimate ingroup format for dealing with resistant behaviors. Confrontation is often necessary when the other methods have not worked and the resisting behavior is jeopardizing the group process. However, several basic guidelines are necessary for effective confrontation to occur. Johnson and Johnson (1982) note that confrontation is not "hit and run." Make sure time is sufficient to work through the confrontation. Take time to hear and understand all points of view (both the group members and the resister) and define the problem as a mutual problem (a problem for the group) and not just the confronted member's problem. Keep feedback directed at the behavior rather than the person and make sure each person owns rather than projects their feelings. Allow the confrontee to sift through and cull out relevant data and express positive potential for re-direction rather than threat whenever possible.

7. **Removal From the Group:** ultimately some group members will not be able to accommodate to the group and will place the whole group at risk if they maintain their involvement. In such cases removal from the group is appropriate. If at all possible, this process should be implemented with options for continued therapeutic help such as individual counseling or referral to another more appropriate group. The task of ending should be addressed with the leaving member if possible, but whether or not the departing group member participates, those that remain should be given opportunity to process their thoughts and feelings.

Manipulating Behaviors

The primary difference between resisting behaviors and manipulating behaviors is that the former are used as a direct protection of self, and the latter are used to control others. In either case the resulting interference with therapeutic growth is the same. Manipulating behavior is directed at getting others to act in a way that is not threatening to self and enables the person to feel in control. It is steering the group and its members to meet one's own needs without their knowledge.

Shostrom (1967) pointed out that manipulation is actually one end of a continuum; the other end is actualization. All manipulating behaviors have counterparts that are potentially beneficial to the effector and the recipient of the action. This is also true within the group process. The idea is not to eliminate these behaviors but rather to translate them into their actualizing forms so that the group and its members can benefit and progress.

Manipulation is another of those terms that raise the hackles of purported victims. It can be used to mount an attack against those who are seemingly restricting one's psychological, physical, social, or intellectual freedom. Manipulation or the suspicion of it motivates members to watch out for their own hides in order to prevent becoming helpless pawns in the hands of a ruthless controller. It generates distance, blocks communication, prevents cohesion, and generally creates a group atmosphere characterized by restraint and distrust.

Interestingly enough the group leader is usually the first to be suspected of manipulating and only later does the suspicion transfer to other members. This is mainly because the group is not clear about the leader's role or intentions. But group members are likely to be manipulative in their actions toward the leader and fellow members. The interplay of multiple personality variables and ambiguous nature of the group situation makes this an inevitable and natural consequence. The purpose of this section is to point out some of the more common types of manipulating behaviors and to discuss their relevance to group counseling. As Shostrom (1967) so aptly observed, manipulation need not be directed from a position of strength and force but can be done effectively from a position of weakness. In Figure 7.2 is clearly demonstrated this possibility and the positive quality of each type of manipulating behavior is shown. Note the counterparts of each behavior and that each can exert a great amount of influence on others regardless of position.

Socializing. Socializers interact extremely well in the group, but their purpose is to extend the counseling relationship into a social relationship rather than to work toward the goals of the group. Ohlsen (1970) described a socializer as a

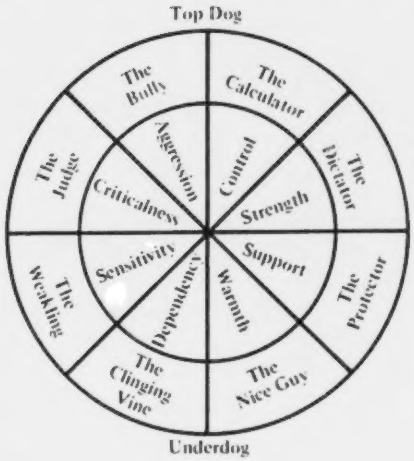
Top Dog
The Bully
The Calculator
The Judge
Aggression
Control
The Dictator
Criticalness
Strength
Sensitivity
Support
The Weakling
Dependency
Warmth
The Protector
The Clinging Vine
The Nice Guy
Underdog

Figure 7.2. The Manipulative Types. (*Adapted from Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality: A Functional Theory and Methodology for Personality Evaluation,* by Timothy Leary, copyright © 1957 The Ronald Press Company, New York, and from *Man, the Manipulator,* by E.L. Shostrom, Copyright © 1967 by Abingdon Press. Reprinted by permission.)

person who "so thoroughly enjoys the quality of his relationships with the members of his counseling group that he may wish to substitute these relationships for those with his important others" (p. 180). Socializers correspond to Shostrom's (1967) "nice guys," who can control the actions of others because they are pleasant, friendly, and well liked. They are people no one wants to harm. "Nice guys," also can influence members not to upset things by getting into nitty gritty problems. They may misuse the capacity for exuding warmth to reinforce nontherapeutic behaviors in the group members.

Socializers need to be reminded of the purposes and intent of the group. Sometimes it is necessary to block the suggestions and input of this type of member so that the group does not become distracted and lose sight of its goals. Socializers can be helped to use their abilities as models, especially for those members who lack social skills, but they also must be encouraged to utilize their social competence outside the group as well. Once they realize they can function authentically in their relations with significant others they will have no more need to manipulate group members and will be able to approach them openly.

Scapegoating. This behavior directs attention toward another individual or group of individuals in order to divert attention from oneself and avert fault or blame. An individual member is consciously or unconsciously identified as the personification of all that is wrong in and out of the group. Through the use of projection or displacement, members can attribute their own problems to others and thus avoid any personal responsibility. The victim, willingly at times and unwillingly at others, is made to feel responsible and required to do penance for the entire group.

Scapegoating is obvious when the entire group gangs up on one particular individual in a barrage of negative feedback. It also can be more subtle, as when the group consistently turns its attention to a key person only when the interaction gets to be particularly disturbing or threatening. In either case the skills usually needed to deal with it are blocking, protecting, and confronting. Leaders must intervene to protect the well-being of the persecuted member and to get members to face up to their actions and take responsibility for themselves. Of special importance for the leader is to see that the group does not use outside-the-group scapegoats so all can concur and thus avoid responsible action.

Dependency. Dependent clients operate from a position of weakness. They need someone else to show them the what, how, and why of everything they need to do in order to solve their problems. They treat others as experts and as the only means of help available. In this way they force others to take control and thus do not have to face the anxiety of being independent. Ohlsen (1970) stated that "dependent clients have had their dependent behaviors reinforced by persons who needed to have someone dependent upon them or by important others such as parents and teachers who did not bother to teach them, during the normal process of growing up, how to behave independently" (p. 167). Shostrom's (1967) representation of this type of person is the "clinging vine." These people completely entwine themselves around others, allowing the others to guide and direct them and shield them from autonomy.

Leaders and members both fall subject to the dependent client because of the appeal to one's pride and expertise. The lesson, of course, that dependent clients must learn is responsibility for self. They must learn to engage in independent behavior, make their own decisions, and avoid dependency reinforcing relationships. Leaders and members alike must refuse to make decisions for the dependent client and must firmly resist taking control. Reinforcement of independent actions within the group is a good place to start, and placing the member in choice-making situations is very helpful.

Submissiveness. Submission differs from dependence in that not only do the clients want someone else to tell them what to do but they also want someone else to do it for them. Submissive clients are completely other-controlled persons who will do almost anything to get the approval of people that they treasure (Ohlsen,, Horne, & Lawe, 1988). They correspond in some ways to Shostrom's (1967) "weaklings" because they have no authority or will power to act on their own and they lack even a minimum of courage to assert themselves in any way. They present such a pitiful countenance that others automatically come to their aid. In group situations they are difficult to deal with because any direct contact with them must be made through a wall of defenders who completely blunt any hurtful intrusions. The weakling also tends to be the dominant focal point because no one else seems to need as much help. Such a person may control the group action and emphasis and effectively disable the helping process from having impact on anyone else.

Two things submissive clients must learn are to be assertive and to take a positive social interest in the welfare of other group members. The use of modeling and role playing can be very helpful in accomplishing the first, and structuring interaction through the use of interpersonal activities will facilitate the second. In addition, empathy expressed through reflection can be beneficial, but if a tendency toward sympathy and overprotectiveness on the part of members does occur, the leader should step in to redirect and limit the interaction.

Aggression. The aggressive group member has been labeled variously as a "pusher" (Kranzow, 1973) and a "bully" (Shostrom, 1967). Both labels represent key identifying traits since the first emphasizes a desire to move ahead as quickly as possible, and the second refers to methods used. Aggressive members are very active, influencing the pace and direction of the group by sheer willfulness and a desire to have others see and do things their way. They instill fear and timidity in other members and can single-handedly create a stalemate in the group progress. Aggression is often combined with hostility, which results in a formidable challenge for even the most experienced and competent group leader. The Achilles' heel of aggressive clients, however, is that they are usually overreacting to a basic feeling of insecurity that they feel will make them susceptible to being hurt, embarrassed, or disliked. Therefore they attempt to act first in what they are sure is a situation designed to reveal their weaknesses and make them vulnerable to attack.

Aggressive members must learn that the group is a safe place to let down defenses and that other people are not out to harm them. They need to experience support and acceptance from the leader, who as an expert represents a special threat, and the members. The leader can encourage other members to stand their ground to the threatening forays of the aggressive member and at the same time help the aggressive member to realize that other members' independence does not constitute a personal attack or diminish their own importance in the group.

Criticism. Being critical is an effective way to put people on the defensive and to control their actions. The key features of this manipulative behavior are evaluation and judgment. Evaluation is based on one's own frame of reference and criteria, which supply the basis for making a judgment that attributes a negative or positive quality to the results of the evaluation. Critical group members may operate under the guise of objectivity so that their assessments seem to be nonpersonal observations of behavior. In reality, however, they may simply be using the role of "judge" to invoke their own rules and thereby direct the interaction of the group. Criticism also tends to make others avoid contact with the critic and hide true feelings. It communicates the opposite of acceptance, which is disruptive to the group.

Critical feedback is definitely a valuable part of the group process when it is given in the interests of the receiver and out of a sincere concern for his or her welfare. When used as a tool of control, however, it is unwarranted. The leader must be careful not to model critical behaviors that can be misconstrued by members and emulated to accomplish their own selfish motives. Ground rules are helpful in keeping critical feedback in check; asking members to speak only for themselves and their own perceptions is also important. Poppen and Thompson (1974) stated that criticism should be directed only at those things a person can change and should be concerned with the here-and-now and questions of "what" and "how," never "why." Since much criticizing is done to avoid being criticized, members must learn both how to receive and how to give feedback. Especially important is for critical members to experience being constructively criticized. In this way they realize the impact of their behavior and can make alterations accordingly.

Domination. Domination is distinct from aggression and monopolizing because it pertains to every aspect of group life, from members to goals to topics of discussion. Dominators through force of strength control the action of the group. They may do it verbally and actively or passively and nonverbally. Shostrom (1967) referred to this type of person as the "dictator" or someone whose will must be done. Dominating group members can determine the entire character and personality of the group if allowed to act unopposed and unquestioned in the group. Thus channels of interaction and diversity of communication patterns are restricted, and in turn the flexibility and freedom of the group are limited in meeting individual needs. Dominating members usually pose the most serious threat to the leader because they like to call the shots. The most difficult form of dominating member is the one who acknowledges the group leader on the surface but works behind the scenes to subvert the leadership role.

Dominators must learn to use personal power constructively, facilitating freedom and openness rather than restricting it or forcing others to be so. They should be given ample opportunity to lead but must not be given any more authority or control in the group than other members. Leaders should welcome the challenge to their leadership role as an opportunity to find out more about their own attitudes toward domination and authority. By supporting the independent actions of other members and respecting the input of the dominating member, without giving it more credence than that of other members., the leader can effect a constructive balance of power that will help the dominator to learn interdependence in relationships inside and outside the group.

Mothering. The mothering group member creates dependency by being the shield and buttress for other members in the face of adversity, attack, or crisis. By supplying this support the "mother" garners a position of power in the group, which can be wielded to stifle interaction or direct it in a more personally desirable vein. This control can be maintained simply by threatening to remove the support and thus is a potent force in the group's development. Shostrom (1967) referred to this type of person as the "protector," who becomes the chief defender of the rights and welfare of others. This type of person is usually above reproach in the eyes of the group members and successfully avoids dealing with any personal problems by continually supporting others as they work on their own.

The mother role (Kranzow, 1973) is a positive addition to the group in that it sees that the needs of members are met. However, this type of member must learn to expose personal needs so that others can respond in kind, thereby creating a symbiotic relationship that leads to mutual growth. As in real life, where mothers must learn to give up their nurturing role as their offspring mature, so the mothering group member must realize members must be granted independence, responsibility for their own lives, and freedom from emotional badgering.

Calculating. The "calculator" (Shostrom, 1967) is a very special type of group member who can steer the group by gauging input for effect and then interjecting it at the precise moment when it will have the most impact. Calculating members are hard to pin down because they are usually very intelligent in the use of their involvement and have the patience to withstand attacks while waiting for the proper moment to counterattack. The calculator often makes highly sensitive and penetrating remarks that contain an element of surprise. Calculators are capable of submarining unsuspecting group members and devastating them at will. As a result, other group members keep a wary eye on them.

Calculators must be handled carefully in the group and in fact may not be good group member material. The reason is the difficulty encountered in engaging them in the continuous interaction of the group since they have enough self-control to decide when and if they will participate. They must learn to be sensitive to the feelings of others since their remarks smack of intellect rather than emotion. They may have to be taught through modeling how to both self-disclose and give constructive feedback. If they are willing or can become willing to receive the group's help, they can be valuable assets because they can estimate accurately the impact of certain behaviors. But if they can't be brought around to full-time, personal participation, probably the better procedure is to work with them on an individual basis.

Helping Behaviors

Helping behaviors are those behaviors members engage in that stimulate and promote the therapeutic group process to the mutual benefit of members. They incorporate many skills and functions described in Chapter 6. The leader therefore has a responsibility to model and teach them to members so they can help one another. In addition, many members have a lot of natural ability in helping others that combined with altruistic motives contribute meaningfully to the helping process. The major helping behaviors are discussed in the following paragraphs. A direct correlation exists between the presence of these behaviors and the effectiveness of the group.

Listening. Active, nonjudgmental listening is a necessity in effective groups. Members who conscientiously listen to one another communicate the essential ingredients in therapeutic helping relationships. This type of listening conveys empathy, acceptance, caring, and respect to the speaker. It is a means of valuing the other person and indicates openness. One of the basic ground rules in any group should be that members are to listen to everyone for the purpose of understanding who they really are and what they really think and feel. Reactive skills described in Chapter 6 are the core of effective listening, and group members can learn them through the use of such exercises as "active listening," described at the end of this chapter. Listening facilitates the group process by establishing the kind of communication base upon which trust and helping relationships can be constructed.

Facilitating. This behavior is important because its purpose is to engage all group members in the interaction of the group. Kranzow (1973) described the facilitator as a person who sees that everyone's needs are met and that all cards are out on the table. Facilitators make efforts to draw group members together, to help them talk about themselves and share their concerns. They tune in to nonverbal cues to draw out less verbal members, ask leading questions, and solicit feedback. Facilitating behaviors assist the problem-solving process because they bring out material for consideration that is crucial to constructive action. They are other-directed and therefore are an integral part of the helper role. As more facilitating is done by members, less responsibility is felt by the group leader, and the members grow in self-confidence, self-esteem, and responsibility in the group.

Leading. At different times during the group process different members may emerge in a leadership capacity. This fluctuation is a common feature of all groups, and group counseling is no exception. Leadership may be assumed or given for a specific purpose or period of time or may be a more permanent role function throughout the group process.

Leading in the therapeutic sense means that the member functions to help group members resolve their problems and accomplish group purposes or tasks. Leading behaviors are important because they serve to disperse responsibility among group members, lifting the burden of responsibility from the leader, and giving members the opportunity to take responsibility for the direction of their own lives and the group. They provide an important learning experience that helps members be more assertive and responsible in their lives outside the group. Leading may incorporate a variety of methods ranging from making suggestions and directing organized activities to leading by example. Leading helps provide structure to the group interaction, decreasing ambiguity and making the group a comfortable and predictable social environment in which to discuss problems.

Self-Disclosing. Johnson (1972) defined self-disclosure as revealing how a person is responding to a present situation, "giving any information about the past that is relevant to understanding how he is reacting to the present" (p. 10). It is the ability to share oneself with others on a personal level. Self-disclosing is at the center of the client role. If clients cannot learn to reveal themselves, especially in regard to their problems, they have little chance of benefiting from the group. Self-disclosure depends on an atmosphere of trust, warmth, and acceptance but is a very specific behavior that can only be performed by the particular individual. To self-disclose for someone else is impossible; the material shared is from the hidden or private sector of one's life. Self-disclosure initiates the problem-solving process in the group and paves the way to understanding, on which action and change are based.

Giving Feedback. Johnson (1972) referred to feedback as self-disclosing how one person is reacting to the way in which another person is behaving. Feedback is the mechanism through which the group can give assistance to individual members. It is the means by which reality testing is incorporated into the group and is the process involved in helping members arrive at specific decision points regarding change. Feedback is basically the ability to share one's perceptions without stating that they are absolutely correct and without forcing the recipient to accept them. As part of the helper role it is designed to provide as accurate and as comprehensive a picture as possible to the client but always allows the client to make the final decision about what to accept or reject. In giving feedback maintaining a tentative posture and to express it in a personalized manner is of particular importance. Feedback is only one person's perception of reality and must be expressed as such.

Leveling. This helping behavior is really the combined action of self-disclosing and giving feedback. Leveling is the open expression of members as they really are and really feel. It involves awareness of one's bodily reactions, thoughts, and feelings and utilizing this knowledge in one's communication with others. Perhaps Rogers' (1962) description of congruence—where internal motivation and external expression are one—is an appropriate definition of leveling. Leveling is the basis of open and honest communication and is the principal means of assuring authenticity and genuineness in group relationships. This behavior is especially important when feelings, reactions, and perceptions are being withheld from the group for some reason, causing a stoppage of therapeutic action and communication in the group. Many times the group needs to engage in leveling so as to clear the air of old feelings that are interfering with an individual's freedom to interact or curtailing free expression in the group. Leveling is both a remediating group behavior and a developmental one.

Keeping Confidence. Confidentiality in the group is the responsibility of all group members, and keeping confidence is the specific behavior that carries out that responsibility. Poppen and Thompson (1974) contrasted keeping confidence with gossiping, pointing out that the latter is destructive to the group process, implies lack of commitment to the group, and is a violation of group trust. The trust issue is certainly at the root of this behavior. If members do not feel their disclosures will remain only with the group, they will not risk exposure. Keeping confidence is therefore one important means of establishing trust. It is also a very individual behavior. Vorrath and Brendtro, (1974) pointed out that each member must realize that the development of trust in all its dimensions is completely dependent on him or her. If members cannot keep each other's disclosures and the group's interactions confidential, the meaning and importance of both will either deteriorate or never materialize. A basic ground rule therefore must be the establishment of confidentiality, and group members must be made aware of their obligation to respect the confidence of each other.

Personalizing Communication. This behavior basically refers to communication within the group that utilizes first and second person pronouns (I and you) rather than third person (he and she). Poppen and Thompson (1974) referred to this as the use of "I-language." Third-person references are an attempt to dissociate oneself from one's own behavior or from direct contact and communication with others. A simple comparison of the difficulty in using the various personal pronouns in conversation makes this fact clear. The third person is the easiest form of pronoun to use because it implies objectivity and personal distance in one's communication. Thus, referring to a member in the group as "he" or "she" avoids making the comment directly to the person and means you are talking *about* the person rather than *to* the person. The second-person pronoun is more difficult to use because it makes the communication relate directly and specifically to another person.

Feedback should always be stated in terms of "you" rather than "he" or "she" so that the message is personal rather than impersonal. The only exception to this guideline is when a particular communication exercise is being used that incorporates a third-person approach into its format. Examples of this would be the "behind-the-back" technique or describing yourself as your own best friend. The first-person pronoun is the most difficult to use because it places the speaker on the firing line. It is the principal means of exposing one's perceptions. This being the case, members often resort to third-person references to avoid personal involvement or to defuse emotional communications. However, the group leader should model personalized communication and request members to use it as well. In this way they learn to take responsibility for their own actions in the group. They also become more careful about *what* they say and *how* they speak to each other, which effectively improves the nature and usefulness of communication in the group. Group members can learn to use this type of communication very quickly if the leader simply asks them to repeat their third-person statements using the appropriate first-or-second-person pronoun. In this way group communication becomes either a personal expression of one's own frame of reference or a personal message to another member.

Emotional Behaviors

The next category of member behaviors is composed of actions characterized by emotional qualities that are difficult for the behaver and the group to cope with effectively. These behaviors are generally associated with the extremes of normal feelings and usually involve overt physical or verbal expressions that tend to stymie even the most experienced and sophisticated leaders and members. Emotions, especially in extreme form, are always difficult to comprehend and tend to either stimulate a natural reaction of avoidance or withdrawal or generate escalation as members "catch" the emotions and spread them throughout the group. For this reason ambivalence is the order of the day whenever someone begins to express strong feelings negatively or positively. Yet a well-known fact is that group dynamics often generate strong feelings. If these reactions are not handled appropriately and responsibly, they can do untold damage to individuals or the group itself. Rather than approaching these behaviors in the blind hope that all will turn out well in the end, a better procedure is for the leader to be prepared in the advent of their occurrence and have some strategies and ideas as to how to respond in a therapeutic manner. This section will only discuss a few of the most common emotional behaviors that occur in the group, but concepts and principles noted can form a basis for dealing with many group behaviors related to the affective domain.

Venting Negative Feelings. In an atmosphere of safety members frequently verbalize strong negative feelings such as anger, hatred, hostility, and frustration toward people and situations both in and out of the group. This type of ventilation can scare members but is usually therapeutic if members do not overreact by withdrawing from or attacking the member and if follow-up action is taken to help the person work through the feelings. Because social mores generally restrain the expression of strong negative feelings, these feelings sometimes have a tendency to accumulate within the individual rather than dissipate. This is especially true if the individual is continually exposed to the situation or the person that stimulates those feelings. The group's first task is to hear the person out and in the process try to determine if the feelings are temporary or the result of a chronic situation or relationship. If the former, mere catharsis may be sufficient with follow-up to develop preventative measures that will reduce the possibility of recurrence. In the latter case a more problem-oriented approach must be taken in which plenty of opportunity is provided to express feelings but with an emphasis on understanding the problem, developing alternatives, forming a plausible plan, and acting to implement it.

When members are experiencing strong negative feelings, they are more likely to take risks that they would not normally take. Thus after feelings are expressed and calm restored, the member may feel sheepish and embarrassed especially if the atmosphere in the group is ominously neutral or quiet. This may cause the person to draw back and develop hostile feelings toward the group. Therefore, get the feelings and reactions of group members out in the open as quickly as possible after ventilation has occurred. In this way the focus is directed to others and the member can calm down.

Members who ventilate can't always remember what they said afterwards. Therefore an important procedure is to get back to that member after a short respite to work through the feelings and situation again. The member can determine the role emotion played in the situation by obtaining feedback from other members and can be helped to think more rationally about alternatives and options available.

When negative feelings are directed toward another member in the group the handling of the interaction is a much more serious matter because the welfare of the group is at stake. This type of behavior is often a derivative of confrontations that take place in the group. Also, strong feelings built up over time in the group make the ground fertile for a verbal attack in which these feelings come pouring out in rapid order. A preventative measure is to encourage members to express their feelings as they occur rather than holding them back in hopes they will disappear. During the exchange keep in touch with reactions of the one being attacked and restrict ventilation to one person at a time so that a ganging-up effect doesn't materialize. At this point deal with the feelings of the attacker rather than allowing the focus to turn to the one being attacked. The ventilator must first come to grips with personal reactions before benefiting from anything the recipient of the barrage might say. The follow-up then can revert to the attacked member and the group's reactions. Other members' perceptions can be used as a means of dealing with allegations made. The total group should be involved so that a precedent of one member attacking and another defending is not set. Maintaining the perspective that venting negative feelings is primarily therapeutic to the person doing it is a necessity. Otherwise much damage can be done if any stock is placed in the emotional charges leveled at another member. Once emotional calm has been restored the charges can be reevaluated but without the contingent threat introduced by the emotional component of the communication.

Physical Aggression. Physical aggression directed toward persons has no place in group counseling. If that possibility exists, a very clear and firm ground rule against it must be laid down, with violation resulting in immediate expulsion from the group. However, the possibility is real that some members may attempt to vent their feelings through physical means because they are not capable of verbal expression or because verbalization alone is not a sufficient outlet. In these cases to use physically expressive activities to release the feelings without a personal attack is appropriate. For example, arm wrestling or attempting to push one another to the floor by pressing on shoulders are useful exercises. Punching bags, cushions, and pillows also can be used. Another exercise is to have a physically aggressive person lie on the floor and have all other members take a firm hold on the person's arms and legs. The person then tries to get up while the members do all they can to restrain him or her. The strenuous nature of this exercise tires the member quickly and by doing so greatly lessens tension and the emotional impulse to be physically aggressive. Verbal follow-up after this activity helps the member deal constructively with the situation that caused the feelings.

With members who have a tendency toward being violent, a prearranged agreement can be worked out so that the member is isolated when aggressive feelings begin to emerge. The use of "time-out partners," described at the end of this chapter, is also effective in dealing with this type of member behavior. Purposes are to calm the person down, temporarily stop the situation that is causing the feelings, and allow for time to think.

The physically aggressive or violent member must be helped to find better ways of reacting. This may involve several steps such as (1) physical expression in a nonthreatening and nonharmful manner, (2) substitution of verbal expression for physical expression, and (3) development of self-monitoring cues that can help prevent impulsive physical outbursts. The member can then become a more productive and adjusted individual who can seek self-expression and fulfillment in socially desirable ways.

Crying. Probably the must uncomfortable emotional behavior experienced in the group is crying. Even though crying is a most natural reaction to sharing a very painful experience or situation, the psychological pressure involved in breaking down is tremendous. Social attitudes about crying, especially for male members, insinuate weakness and lack of self-control. A great resistance often exists to crying because of the fear of what others' reactions will be. As one young woman blurted in reaction to breaking down during her discussion of a particularly hurtful relationship, "I'm afraid you all think I'm just a slobbering idiot." The fear of embarrassment and being seen as a weak person forces many members to contain their tears. This frequently results in mounting pressure, especially if the member continues to work with the painful material. The end product of this buildup then is, in the mind of the crier, far worse because no control over feelings exists. For this reason members often withdraw from the arena of action when they suspect tears are imminent in an effort to avoid a "gusher."

Seeing a person cry also has significant impact on other members. They want to help the person but may not really know how. They also may develop the attitude of "boy, that's not going to happen to me," and then withdraw or pursue an entirely cognitive course in the discussion of their problems. This hesitance and inaction often makes the person who cries feel even worse. If the group does not react spontaneously to support and help the member, the leader must take steps to do so. Verbalization on the part of others especially in the form of reflection is necessary. And some form of physical gesture such as touching the person's arm or putting an arm around his or her shoulder is helpful. More than anything the group must communicate that they are aware of the various implications that make crying difficult and at the same time convey the message that crying is all right.

The characteristics of trust and acceptance if an intricate part of the group atmosphere alleviate much of the resistance to

3.7

crying. However, the group must take care not to seduce a member into crying just to demonstrate its ability to handle it. Some leaders function under the misguided notion that crying is synonymous with deeply meaningful group interaction and direct their efforts to see that members reach that point. Group members need to view crying as a natural part of certain self-disclosures requiring the support and attention of the group. However, it isn't necessarily a symbol of group progress. Nor should efforts be made to belabor distraught members. They should be helped to regain their composure after a reasonable period of time. This is particularly important if the member must leave the group to attend classes, go home, go to work or relate in other social situations. Nothing is more embarrassing than to have to face outsiders knowing your eyes are red and swollen from crying. If not in appropriate control at the end of the group session, the member should be retained until he or she is able to function normally again.

Crying is another form of ventilation that can be therapeutic. In some cases really no other way exists to express one's pain and crying does so effectively. Once these feelings are out the task of working on problems that generate them is easier. Group members understand the seriousness and have a deeper feel for the person. The overreaction that must be guarded against is when the member begins to wallow in self-pity or to use crying to demand the group's attention. When this happens the leader should intervene to bring the member up to a more cognitive level, with emotions placed in proper perspective, and turn attention to making necessary changes.

Affection. Extremes in negative or painful emotions are not the only emotional behaviors difficult to cope with in groups. Extremes in positive feelings, especially related to affection, also cause problems. Normally much more social restraint is related to the expression of affection than to the expression of negative feelings. The reasons for this are that sexual implications may be associated with showing warm feelings and that rejection is a much more threatening force than punishment. If someone expresses warmth, caring, affection, or love in an overt manner, it tends to raise questions about the real motivation behind the actions. Similarly if a person reveals a positive feeling to another person who rejects it, little recourse is available for the rejected person other than to withdraw with hurt feelings. If someone addresses us negatively, however, the possibility is always open to respond in kind. Strong positive feelings therefore remain quite disguised in many social situations.

In a cohesive and close group the possibilities of overt physical and verbal expression of affection increase. As Bach (1954) stated "in giving of love and sympathy the group as a rule naturally goes much further in overt expressions than any other professional therapist [or counselor] would, could, or should ever do. At such moments the group demonstrates a truly remarkable intensity in its expression of support" [p. 96]. In most cases the physical expression of affection is what causes the most concern. Authorities, family members, and other significant persons with a vested interest in the group members or the group process may perceive any expression of physical affection with suspicion. They may even exert pressures on the leader and/or group members that produce inhibitions, create feelings of guilt, and cast a negative reflection on the entire group process. Ethical practice guidelines restrict the extent of physical touch to appropriate supportive contact and hugs. Thus the spontaneous expression of physical affection is justifiably limited. In addition, structured activities that involve physical touch should have clear guidelines and precise purposes. Other than with those structured activities and guidelines, members should be encouraged to rely primarily on verbal means of expression.

In the verbal domain expressions of warmth should be tempered by an awareness of how the receiver may respond. They should never be used to embarrass or make another person feel uncomfortable for the sake of gratifying one's own ego. Neither should verbal expressions incorporate a demand to which the other person must respond. They must simply be restricted to disclosing one's own feelings. Following these guidelines can alleviate much of the discomfort and difficulty associated with affectionate behaviors and can make them a viable therapeutic influence in the group process.

Acting Out. Acting-out behaviors may incorporate any number of previously mentioned resistant, manipulative, or emotional behaviors but constitute a very special category because of their intent to flaunt the authority of the group leader or the freedom and acceptance of the group. Johnson (1963) felt that a frequent cause of acting-out behavior is the negative feelings individuals have toward the group leader that cannot be expressed. As a result the member engages in overt acts which are designed to threaten, frustrate, irritate, and intimidate the leader. Ohlsen, Horne, and Lawe, (1988) presented a varying perspective indicating that acting out may simply be a matter of members using treatment as an excuse to do things they ordinarily would not do. Acting-out behavior may take the form of tardiness, absences, use of drugs or alcohol, or overt, in-group, aggressive actions. In all cases they immediately bring attention to the member and usually are disruptive to the group process.

Acting out also may be a group test administered by the member to determine boundaries of group interaction and to find out exactly where he or she stands with the leader and members. Whatever the motive, efforts should be made to involve all members in the discussion rather than letting the acting-out behavior degenerate group interaction into a one-to-one confrontation. This is difficult to do especially if the overt behavior is directed at the leader. Other members are naturally curious about how the leader will handle it. Nevertheless the leader should attempt to get members to express their feelings and perceptions so that the instigator is given feedback from a variety of viewpoints. In this way the entire group takes responsibility for coping with the acting-out member. Another effective approach is to use Glasser's (1965) question "what are you doing?" (avoiding asking "why," which would lead to rationalizations). This request makes the member assess his or her own behavior rather than forcing others to react. If these in-group strategies do not work, then an alternative is to ask the acting-out person to take a break and return to the group when functioning in an acceptable manner. If acting out continues unabated in a disruptive fashion, individual counseling may be more appropriate because the member will not have an audience. In more extreme cases the need may be to make a referral to inpatient psychotherapy.

Subgrouping Behaviors

The generic definition of a group is "three or more persons" because with the introduction of the third and succeeding members the phenomenon of group dynamics emerges, part of those dynamics is the potential for coalitions to form. Consequently, the formation of subgroups is a naturally occurring aspect of all groups including counseling and therapy groups. As a group develops coalitions become an integral part of group life. As such, subgrouping is one of the major group member behaviors of which leaders must be aware and must learn to utilize effectively.

In one sense subgrouping behavior serves as a barometer of group health. If subgroups emerge, dissolve, and re-emerge in the course of group interaction, and the membership of coalitions varies from topic to topic and issue to issue, the group has fluidity which enables it to maintain resiliency and flexibility. On the other hand, if subgroups solidify with the same members coalescing all the time regardless of the topic or issue, the group develops a rigidity that interferes with and undermines the therapeutic nature of the group. Therefore, as long as subgroups retain variable membership, reorganize in response to different focal points and function generally within the overall norm structure of the group, no particular concern need be raised. However, if persistent patterns of polarization combined with consistent subgroup membership continually emerge across all group interactions, action to de-rigidify the subgrouping process is necessary.

Yalom (1985) noted that subgrouping or fractionalization is an inevitable part of the group process and if not attended to can be a destructive force. Subgrouping may occur in one of two general ways: (1) within the context of the group itself and (2) as a result of external group contact and interaction. Within the group, subgrouping is by far the easiest to deal with because the dynamics are present in a first hand, here-and-now format that can be processed as they are occurring. Especially in heterogeneous groups, coalitions between members with more similar concerns, problems, values, or perspectives tend to occur. Such coalitions provide excellent material and opportunities for learning acceptance and appreciating diversity, commodities that have unlimited value in relating to and coping with the world outside the group. The primary facilitative factor in dealing with ingroup subgrouping is raising what is happening to the awareness of the group members rather than letting such dynamics hover beneath the surface where assumptions and suppressed emotions can begin to ferment into misunderstandings that will jeopardize healthy group functioning.

Outgroup subgrouping dynamics are much more complicated to cope with. Subgroups with an outgroup derivation may arise in several different ways: (1) members may seek out contact with other members based on what they have observed or heard in group; (2) social contact outside the group such as getting together for a beer or cup of coffee may serve as impetus for a subgroup emerging, and (3) on occasion, intimacy between two group members may generate a dyadic subgroup. Note, that while social incentives motivate members to connect outside the group, equally strong privacy incentives inhibit group members from becoming intimately involved with each other so as not to become group material. Members often view socializing as non-problematic but tend to draw the line on close relationships at least until the group is over.

Yalom (1985) depicted the problem of subgrouping as stemming "from the belief of two or more members that they can derive more gratification from a relationship with each other than one from the entire group" (p. 334). With respect to dyadic intimacy he stated, "members who become involved in a love-sexual relationship will almost inevitably award their dyadic relationship higher priority than their relationship to this group" (p. 335). He added that members who "violate group norms by secret liaisons are opting for need gratification rather than pursuit of personal change" (p. 337). Thus, the evidence is that subgrouping in any of its derivatives is potentially destructive to the group.

Outgroup connections that lead to subgrouping are not all negative. If such contacts occur in the context of overall group goals and do not lead to collusion and the emergence of a "no talk" subterfuge, they can be very helpful and therapeutic. The obvious key is that any significant out of group contacts or experiences are open and above board and that material from such contacts is accessible to the group. Yalom (1985) observed that "it is not the subgrouping per se that is destructive, but the conspiracy of silence that surrounds it" (p. 339). His research has indicated that such suppression of expression not only leads to a deterioration in therapeutic group process, but also is a contributing factor to attrition and drop outs as individuals fail to cope with being included or excluded in a subgroup.

The general guidelines for dealing with subgrouping behavior are as follows:

1. Make expectations relative to subgrouping behavior clear both in screening interviews and in the context of group interaction. Some group leaders make specific groundrules that delimit out of group contact. While subgrouping can not likely be absolutely forbidden, actions that would encourage are to be avoided.

2. Bring all coalescing, colluding, and subgrouping behavior that occurs in the group to the group's attention.

3. Establish a guideline and expectation that the group be informed about extra group activity among members.

4. As a group leader, do not collude with subgroups overtly or covertly by not disclosing what you perceive and/or know about the subgroup.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Most group-member behaviors, as diverse as they are, can be predicted according to the climate of the group, the leader's knowledge of human reactions, and the dynamics involved in bringing the individual to the group. Most of the detrimental effects of the negative behaviors described in this chapter can be prevented or at least curtailed if precautionary measures are taken to ensure a healthy group atmosphere and if the leader is willing to act to redirect the behaviors. The positive behaviors, whether actualized counterparts of negative behaviors or helping behaviors, can also be incorporated into the group process by laying clear ground rules and by modeling, teaching, and intervening when necessary.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities can be used to teach members effective group behaviors and skills, to help them understand their own and other members actions in the group, and to help them cope with the more difficult emotional behaviors that may occur. Generally, the activities included in this section pertain to enhancing appropriate and therapeutic member behaviors and to understanding the nature of member actions and experiences in the group.

Active Listening

This activity can be used to teach members the helping behavior of listening by developing the specific skills of restatement, reflection, and clarification. The exercise has four parts and requires at least an hour to do. Even more time is preferable, and the exercise can be done in two sessions, concentrating on Parts A and B in the first session and C and D in the second.

A. Making Contact. Have members pair up with another group member, usually a person they know least well. This can be done nonverbally through the use of milling, or it can be accomplished simply by numbering off. Once partners are together have them disperse around the room so that there will be as little interference as possible during the exercise.

B. Hearing and Being Heard: The Skill of Restatement.

1. *Verbal Communication*

   Have one partner make a personal statement about himself or herself. The other partner must repeat that statement word for word exactly as it was said. If the statement is repeated with even the slightest variation, the first partner must reply with an emphatic "no" and then reiterate the statement until it is repeated exactly right. Each partner does this with three different statements.

2. *Inflection or Tone of Voice*

Repeat the procedure as described in B.1. except this time incorporate an emotional quality in the statement expressed through fluctuation in the speaker's tone of voice. This time the partner must repeat the statement exactly, word for word and in the same tone of voice. Do this three times each.

3. *Non-Verbal Communication or Body Language*

Repeat the procedure as described in the first direction, but this time include gestures for emphasis in the statement. This time the partner must repeat the statement exactly, word for word, in the same tone of voice, and using the same gestures.

This part of the activity teaches the skill of restatement and focuses on the various levels of communication: the verbal level (word for word), the inflection level (same tone of voice), and the nonverbal level (same gestures).

C. Transition: Restating in Your Own Words. Have the partners carry on a conversation on any topic they choose for a period of ten minutes. However, before adding to the conversation each person must restate in their own words what was said. The following ground rule must be followed:

> *Once the first statement has been made the other person can make a statement only after restating the ideas and feelings of the first speaker accurately and to that speaker's satisfaction.* All individual comments must be restated satisfactorily before continuing. See to it that this rule is followed for the entire ten minutes.

The purpose of this aspect of the exercise is to help members realize how often their own thoughts interfere with hearing other people out. By repeating their partner's statement before making one's own comment, chances are greater that complete communication will take place. The object is to concentrate on what the other person is saying rather than on organizing what is about to be said.

D. Understanding and Being Understood.

1. *Declarative Statements: The Skill of Reflection.* Have one partner make a personal *declarative statement* about himself or herself, his or her life, thoughts, or feelings. The other partner then responds by saying "do you mean. . .?" and adding what she or he perceives the meaning of the statement to be. If the statement is accurate the first partner says "yes" and if inaccurate "no." The responding partner must get three "yes" answers to the same statement before she or he proceeds to make her or his own statement. Repeat this process three times for each partner using a different statement each time. This part of the activity teaches the skill of reflection.

2. *Personal Questions: The Skill of Clarification.* Have one partner ask the other partner a personal question. Instruct them to make the questions as personal and honest as possible because the questions will not have to be answered. The questioned partner responds" are you asking. . .?" and then adds what is felt to be the meaning and intent of the questioner. She or he must get three "yes" answers from the questioner before asking his or her own personal question. Repeat this process three times for each partner using a different question each time. The skill taught in this part of the exercise is clarification.

The complex nature of communication is pointed out using the two basic forms of expression, the declarative statement and the question. The activity reveals how one person really has difficulty in understanding another's personal communication and stresses the fact that one statement or question can have a multitude of meanings.

Nonverbal Communication Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to help members develop their skills in nonverbal communication of feeling and utilizing them to improve the communication process in the group. It is also an effective device for leading members in a step-by-step manner into dealing with feelings that are a part of their personal lives.

A. Recognizing Feelings. Divide the group into dyads and have them sit facing each other having one partner facing the chalkboard and the other facing away from it. The leader writes a word from the following list on the board and the person facing the board tries to communicate the feeling nonverbally and as naturally as possible to the partner. After five seconds, call time and have the observer try to identify the feeling. Repeat this about four times and then reverse positions and do it again with different words. Then ask partners to think of a feeling they have experienced often and try to communicate it nonverbally to each other. Discuss the difficulties involved in communicating and identifying feelings using only nonverbal cues. Also discuss the differences in communicating positive and negative feelings noting similarities and contrasts. Here are some feelings words that can be used.

Hostility
Joy
Frustration
Satisfaction
Anger
Happiness
Confusion
Pride
Love
Anxiety
Suspicion
Fear

B. Feelings and Situations. Since most feelings are hard to separate from the situations that cause them, it is often easier to communicate the feelings given a context in which they occurred. Divide the group into subgroups of four. Ask one member of each group to come to you and give that member a description of one of the following situations. The member then returns to the group and attempts to naturally and nonverbally communicate the emotions associated with the situation. Other situations can be substituted or added at the leader's discretion. The other group members try to determine the feelings and make educated guesses about what the situation might be. Repeat this procedure until all four members have had the opportunity to communicate a situational feeling.

1. You are bored and tired during a class discussion. How do you portray that feeling nonverbally?

2. Another person does something or says something that hurts your feelings deeply. How do you portray those feelings nonverbally?

3. You feel affection for another person but at the same time you are not sure the other person feels the way you do. How do you show your feelings nonverbally?

4. Your closest friend is leaving town for long time and you will have no chance to see her while she is gone. How do you show your feelings nonverbally?

C. Personal Situations. Reconvene the entire group if it is a counseling size group or stay with groups of four if larger. Have the members think of a recent past experience that was quite emotional for them. Have individual members in turn demonstrate those feelings nonverbally while the group observes. Observers then discuss what they perceived without comment from the person who expressed the feelings. After discussion is concluded the presenter indicates how accurate the group's perceptions were and shares the situation and feelings with them. Repeat this process until all have participated in conveying a personal feeling.

This particular segment of the exercise was suggested by Dr. Wayne J. Kassera, College of Education, University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Barriers to Communication

Sometimes members can understand communication barriers more clearly if they are depicted in a physical manner. The purpose of this exercise is to help group members realize the importance of communication in the group and think about strategies for overcoming obstacles.

Form dyads and have members begin a personal sharing type of discussion. Instruct them to sit *back to back* as they talk and not to turn around. After several minutes have them change their position to *side by side but without looking at each other.* Then have them *face each other without looking at each other.* During these changes they should continue to share. Finally have them carry on a *normal face-to-face* conversation. Stop the conversation after a few minutes and ask for reactions and feedback. Point out the importance of eye contact and careful listening in communication. Then have the partners reengage in their discussion. Number members in each dyad as a one or a two. Assuming both are sitting, after a few minutes ask the ones to *stand up* while continuing the conversation. A few minutes later ask the ones to *stand on their chairs* while talking. Again after a few minutes instruct the ones to *sit down*. Repeat the entire procedure giving the same instruction to the twos. When both are at an equal level again ask for feedback and reactions, paying special attention to the impact of position and role on the communication process.

Cartoon of Member Reactions

The caricatures depicted in the cartoon in Figure 7.3 can be duplicated and passed out to members to help them discuss and understand the various defensive reactions members display in groups. The handout can be used in several ways. (1) It can be used simply as an open-ended stimulus for discussion; (2) members can write and discuss captions for each figure, attempting to identify the message that is being conveyed; (3) members can label each figure with an appropriate name that represents the behavior displayed (for example, Hostile Harry); or (4) members can use the cartoon as a means of identifying their own and others' reactions, placing names of the members beneath the caricatures themselves and then getting feedback from others as to what they think. Also, since the caricatures are exaggerations they should be used in a lighthearted vein and not as a means of castigating any one member for unusual behavior or for giving negative feedback. Follow-up discussion might center on how to help each of these types of persons be more comfortable, involved, and open in the group.

Time-Out Partners

The time-out partner activity (Poppen & Thompson, 1974) lends itself well to working with the more negative member behaviors. At any point in the action the leader can call "time-out" and members pair off for a short time to counsel or coach each other. Partners can be selected at random, the same partners can meet together for a period of time, or some

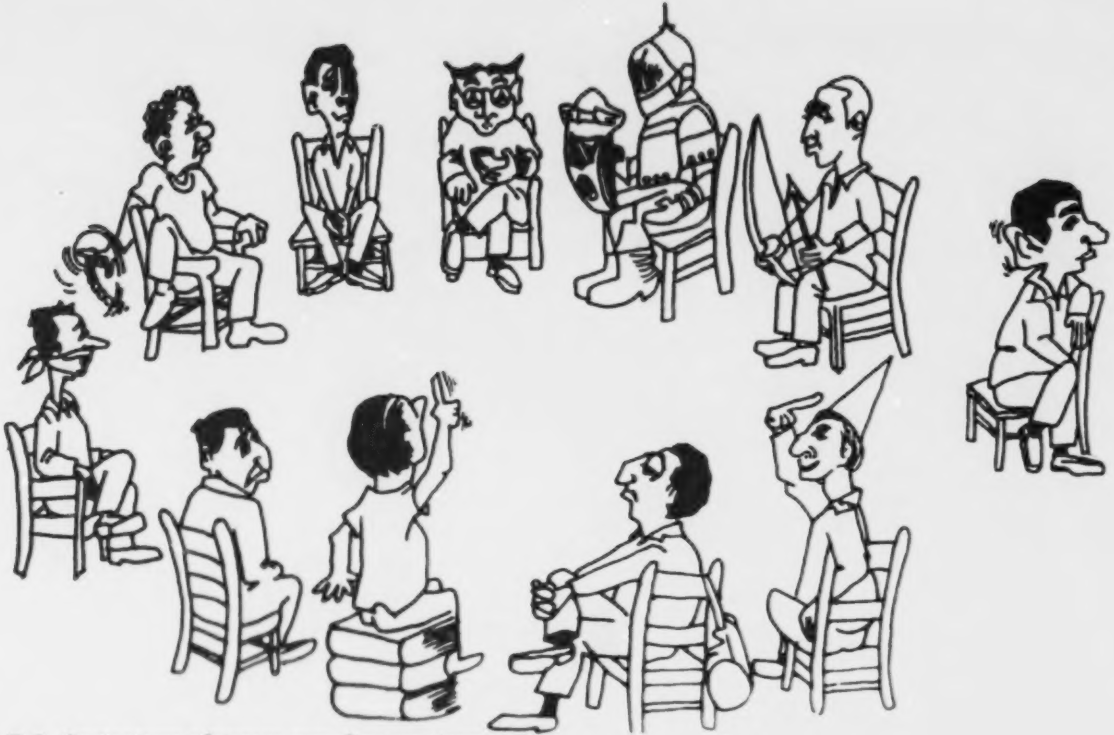

Figure 7.3. Caricature of group-member reactions.

criterion (such as using stars with isolates) can be used to match partners. The idea is to stop the group interaction temporarily to give individuals a respite from the pressures of group interaction and to provide them with time to relax and reassess their involvement and behavior. Members usually respond well to this activity and occasionally initiate the request for a time-out period themselves. The time-out concept can also be applied on an individual basis where certain members of the entire group go off by themselves for a short time and then return to the group. This technique can easily be adapted to a variety of different group settings, such as the classroom, guidance groups, and psychotherapy groups.

Dollar Game

An excellent activity for helping group members understand manipulative behavior is to have each member bring a dollar to the group meeting (fifty cents or a quarter can be used for children). Instruct the members to place their dollars in the center of the group. Then tell them that their task is to decide as a group which individual is to receive *all* the money. No deals to share the money can be made and the individual chosen will in fact get *all* the money for personal use. Allow the group to interact until they reach consensus on the group member who is to receive the money. Give the money to that individual. Conduct a follow-up discussion directed at sharing feelings and reactions to the task particularly emphasizing values and strategies used in the negotiation process. After some discussion pass out a copy of Shostrom's (1967) Top Dog/Underdog diagram (see Figure 7.2) and have members assess the types of manipulative strategies that were used in the group interaction. Have members identify their own strategies and also give their perceptions of other members' strategies.

A variation of this activity for children is to use a free trip to a special place like Disney World as the thing group members must decide to give to one member. Also, the "closed fist" exercise described at the end of Chapter 4 can be used for the same purpose as this activity.

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Chapter 8

DIFFERENTIATING GROUPS

Up to this point we have concentrated on the nature of the group process and the integral components that interact to create that process namely the leader and the members. However, groups have many different facets which come into play in the context of translating group process into practice. The purpose of the next three chapters is to focus on the technical dimensions of group work as a means of providing hands-on tools for implementing group programs.

As the field of group work has grown, acquiring merit as a human service modality, it has developed a technology of its own which has both affirmed its validity and enhanced its reliability across client populations and settings. The fact that groups are here to stay is well established. Conyne (1985) observed that "groups are a dominant, omnipresent force in our lives and they most likely will continue to be so well into the future" (p. 61). This is because research and clinical practice have demonstrated that group work is an entity with specific knowledge, procedures, processes, and mechanics that can be beneficially learned, applied and adapted in most human contexts. The problem is no longer one of proving the potential and relevance of group work in facilitating growth, enhancing productivity and resolving problems. The problem now is how to most effectively and efficiently utilize group process. This is where the elements of differentiation, organization, and evaluation of groups becomes important. Unless group leaders can effectively do all three, the prospects of establishing effective groups and developing functional group programs are curtailed.

This chapter will focus on the first of these three components of group process. Differentiation will be addressed from the standpoint of process and focus perspectives and via group typology based on the nature of groups and client populations served. In Chapter 9 organization will be discussed in a general to specific manner. Starting with the perspective of outreach and guidelines for planning group programs, we will then delineate group composition factors and technical considerations for forming groups and conclude with an example of a group counseling format. Evaluation will be discussed from a practitioner's perspective which differentiates research from evaluation and provides specific tools and suggestions for evaluating process and outcome. (See Chapter 10.) Each chapter will conclude with learning activities that pertain to the information presented.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN GROUPS

The term "group" usually conjures up the image of a particular type of group or group approach, most likely one the counselor has been exposed to, trained in, or experienced. This often creates a limited purview from which it is difficult to build a flexible and varied group program that will serve a variety of purposes and meet a wide range of client needs. The ability to differentiate between groups based on process characteristics and qualities unique to certain group formats and purposes will provide a solid basis for organizing and implementing appropriate and comprehensive group programs (Trotzer, 1975). Consideration will be given first to process perspectives that attribute contextual diversity to groups and then group typology will be described from both a process and client perspective.

SOCIO-PROCESS AND PSYCHE-PROCESS GROUPS

Coffey (1952) initially proposed the idea that groups could be categorized as socio-process groups (task-oriented in nature) or psyche-process groups (person-oriented in nature). Kemp (1970) expanded on this idea, relating it particularly to group guidance and counseling. A socio-process group is one in which goals are external to the group and involves tasks for which the group is given or assumes responsibility. "The intent of the [socio-process] group and its specific reason for being are not primarily the self-improvement of members" (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, p. 126) but rather are to accomplish a set task. The socio-process group is thus task-oriented and attempts to utilize the resources (members) of the group in the most efficient and effective manner to accomplish its mission. The group is problem-oriented only to the point of resolving difficulties that are directly associated with the task or are interfering with the group's progress in working on the task. Members receive gratification and fulfillment as a result of their contribution to the task, their cooperation with other members, and ultimately from the accomplishment of the task itself. The leader is primarily responsible for getting the job done by keeping the group goal-oriented, assessing the group's resources, and mobilizing them to achieve its task goal. Examples of socio-process groups are committees, athletic teams, work groups in business and industry such as "quality circles" or think-tanks, task-force groups, and other such groups that interact to attain an end result in the form of a program, policy, product, victory, and so forth.

A psyche-process group is one in which goals come from within the group, particularly from the internal frame of reference of individual group members themselves. The process is person-oriented as opposed to task-oriented, and individual growth, personal learning, and personal problem-solving are the focuses. Group interaction itself is of primary importance. Member satisfaction results from involvement and interaction with group members, from increasing knowledge about self and others, and from personal problem-solving, change, and growth. The leader is responsible to the *members*, not to a task, and functions to create a therapeutic climate in the group, to facilitate interaction, and to protect group members if that becomes necessary. Examples of psyche-process groups are counseling and therapy groups, marital enrichment, encounter, sensitivity and personal growth groups.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1971) noted that both socio- and psyche-process groups can be either individual-oriented or group-oriented in purpose. That is, the interaction of any group benefits either individuals separately or the group as a unit. For example, classrooms are individual socio-process groups whereas industrial work groups tend to be group socio-process groups. Therapy groups are examples of individual psyche-process groups while T-groups are group psyche-process groups. The individual focus therefore means that results are gauged in terms of what each individual member achieves as a function of group interaction. The group focus by contrast results in increased group efficiency and increased knowledge and awareness of the group process itself.

In most guidance, counseling, and psychotherapy groups the primary goal should be to use the group process for the benefit of individual members. This goal is basic to the nature of therapeutic groups. Therefore, if groups do not promote the best interests of the individuals involved, they are not effectively serving the cause of human growth and development. On the other hand, the group emphasis in certain groups like class meetings, guidance classes, T-groups, consciousness-raising groups and human-relations groups may serve an extremely important function in helping members learn cooperation and respect for one another and appreciation of those who have ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics different from theirs.

Although all counseling and psychotherapy groups are basically psyche-process in concept, the socio-process concept is often used, particularly as a basis for leadership strategies. Some leaders prefer to start their groups on a structured, task-oriented basis. They use the tasks to develop a group atmosphere in which members get to know each other, gain trust for one another, and develop cohesiveness through working together on the tasks. Gradually then the leader turns the responsibility and focus over to members and facilitates the evolution of the psyche-process so members can get down to the business of working on their own problems and concerns. And, conversely, groups (such as committees and work teams in industry) that are socio-process in concept are utilizing psyche-process strategies. Before receiving a specific task to work on, members of the group spend time and effort, often via T-group, encounter group, or human-relations methods, getting to know each other and building a group relationship. Emphasis is on acceptance of self and others and interpersonal communication. Once the members have begun to develop a relationship where personal needs are met, they are then assigned a task to accomplish, switching the emphasis of the group from psyche-process to socio-process.

In either of these strategies the leader can move back and forth between the two processes as the group needs dictate. At times the psyche-group may benefit from the structure and responsibility of a task and the socio-group may need to reestablish the person-to-person quality of their group interaction. So the tenor of the group can change depending on its overall purpose and the needs of the members.

DIFFERENT FOCUSES IN GROUPS

Groups also can be distinguished on the basis of the focus of the interaction in the group. Patterns of communication in a group define its nature and solidify characteristics that can be used to describe it. Several basic focuses tend to occur in groups. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Each can promote the effectiveness of the group or disrupt it. The leader has to be aware of the type of focus that will best serve the interests of members and achieve the group's goals and act to see that that focus is developed and maintained. Each focus is briefly discussed in the following pages.

Here-and-Now Perspective

This focus is on what is happening to the individual and the group at the moment. The concentration is on the action and interaction as it develops in the group. This orientation brings out members' feelings and thoughts that are part of their present awareness and deals with current behavior. It maintains that what individuals are like in the group is representative of their personalities and actions outside the group. The basic assumption is that personality is consistent in human beings and that the group can use what occurs in the group as material for helping members resolve problems outside the group. The here-and-now focus is an integral part of growth groups, is highly significant in counseling, and psychotherapy groups (Carroll, 1986; Yalom, 1985) and has procedural importance in other groups. The here-and-now is a firm foundation for beginning communication and relationships because all parties have equal access to the stimuli of interaction. It provides a common starting point and is a necessary component of any effort to increase self-knowledge and improve social adequacy. It is also the perspective that gives feedback its most meaningful impact. However, the here-and-now also can be a means of avoiding problem issues that involve the outside world. Too much emphasis on the present (in the group) interaction can lead groups away from reality instead of closer to it.

One of the charges leveled against marathon groups and encounter groups is that they become so enmeshed in the here-and-now interaction of the session that little if any transfer of learning occurs. Participants have to wait until another opportunity arises to engage in a similar process to use their newfound insights and skills. This focus also can stymie group members in their development of plans for action that have a future, outside-the-group application. The group leader therefore must be able to assess when the group needs to get to the here-and-now but also must sense when that focus is running counter to the process of therapeutic change.

There-and-Then Perspective

This focus deals with events, behaviors, or feelings that occurred in the past but are still interfering with the adjustment of the individual or the group in the present. This perspective may draw on either conscious or subconscious material in its effort to identify causes and to clarify and resolve problems. This perspective should not be misconstrued as displaying dirty laundry or looking for skeletons in someone's closet. The past is a natural element in any person's life and in the group's life and can contribute meaningfully to the helping process if utilized in the proper manner. The individual's past is an extremely important theme in group therapy and has importance but to a lesser degree in group counseling. The group's past, typified in comments like "remember last time," is important in growth groups, counseling groups, and therapy groups but has little value except for transition purposes in other groups. The there-and-then is particularly useful if members have unresolved feelings about past events that are currently stifling growth. Conflicts unsuccessfully dealt with, feelings of guilt, actions that are regretted, and traumatic experiences stemming from rape, physical abuse, incest or substance abuse are examples of past material that can be brought out beneficially in the group.

The important thing to remember about this focus is that efforts should always be made to bring the person up to date so that the disclosure does not become just another unsatisfactory means of handling the situation. The past is of value when it can perpetuate adjustment to the present and stimulate growth in the future. Frequently members use the there-and-then to avoid getting into the here-and-now problems of their lives. A common ploy in groups is to play the "remember when" nostalgia game as a means of procuring a reprieve from working on problems. The group leader must sense when the there-and-then is losing its impact in the helping process and help the group move on to a more valuable focus. Similarly the leader must help the group avoid rehashing its past to such an extent that it never catches up to itself. Some groups continually dwell on clarifying past behaviors, perceptions, and intentions. They get to the end of their sessions feeling that they have analyzed their group history without ever having experienced it as a present phenomenon.

Social-Value Perspective

This focus basically asks the question "What does society expect and how does this affect me?" It attempts to assess a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in light of their usefulness in daily life. This perspective makes full use of the group as a mini-society reflecting the standards, norms and expectations of the outside world. The social-value focus is the key to reality testing that needs to be done in the group to make the process meaningful for transfer of learning. The basic idea is that if members can provide realistic feedback and evaluations, individuals can make better decisions and develop plans for change that have a higher probability of success. The necessity of this perspective in most groups is obvious, especially when problems are involved. As Glasser (1965) noted, most problems initially result from a denial of reality, and if the group does not attempt to reestablish the member's contact with reality, the process has little positive effect. In guidance groups, counseling groups, and therapy groups this perspective is mandatory. In all other groups it is important from the standpoint of credibility. Individual members may resist this perspective because it demands that they face problems in light of not only how they see them but how other people see them as well. In an effort to protect their members, groups sometimes deny reality and on occasion actually distort it. When this situation occurs, the relevance and usefulness of the group process in solving problems is negated. Whenever leaders become part and parcel of a group's refusal to be a reality check and do not act responsibly to include that focus, they are acting unethically. Sometimes the leader may have to stand alone and confront members with reality in order to force them to deal realistically with each other's problems.

Skills-and-Tools Perspective

This focus, as the name implies, is concerned with providing group members with the technical means of resolving their problems and making growth-facilitating decisions. This perspective provides a focus around which entire groups can be built since it concentrates on providing members with certain basic skills that will enhance their personal welfare. A group can be organized to help members learn a variety of skills ranging from decision-making to social interaction skills. (Gazda & Brooks, 1985; Johnson & Johnson, 1979). This perspective can perpetuate both preventative and remedial helping-group methods. Gazda has promoted this perspective stating "I think we need to employ a model in which, after clients' deficits are identified in the interview format, they are put through a systematic, structured, intensive skills training program" (Ritter, West & Trotzer, 1987, p. 296). The skills and tools perspective are an essential part of guidance groups and can be one of the means of implementing action during the work stage of counseling groups. This focus has relevance in therapy groups and incidental impact in growth groups.

The expertise of the leader is especially important to this focus for two reasons. First, he or she must recognize when the lack of certain skills is a major part of members' problems and act to fulfill that void in the group. Second, he or she must have the wherewithal to teach the needed skills. The only draw-back to this perspective is that it can become a rigid and inflexible means of running groups if the leader begins focusing only on teaching the skill and not on the persons in the group. In other words, it can develop into a classroom-type group with a leader-centered structure and academic content but little personal relevance to group members.

Agent-of-Change Perspective

The philosophical basis for this focus is that each person is responsible for learning about himself or herself, and the group is an arena in which that learning can take place. Reddy (1985) believed this perspective will become increasingly important as group work reaches for its zenith in society's effort to meet personal, social, and business needs. She stated, "with the breakdown of the family unit and a continuing depersonalized society, individuals will be in, if not seek out, small groups of people to fulfill their affiliations, tasks and personal, interpersonal and organizational needs" (p. 106). The main objective is to change oneself in a desired direction and to help others do the same. Self-acceptance, self-knowledge, and self-responsibility are associated with this perspective. It also contributes to members' understanding and acceptance of others.

The material for group discussion is personal functioning and involves self-disclosure and direct feedback as the principal means of acquiring self-understanding. This focus tends to be the primary emphasis in growth groups because of the basic assumption that participants in these groups are healthy, normal individuals who willingly involve themselves and who are capable of governing their own lives. The advantage of this perspective is that ideally each member chooses the amount of involvement, disclosure, feedback, or change desired. However, in reality sometimes one has difficulty assessing whether the person, the group, or the leader is the motivating force in the interaction. All helping groups should advocate self-responsibility, but especially in counseling groups members need to learn how to be responsible for themselves before they can practice it. Therefore the group leader may need to help the group develop this perspective over time rather than use it as the primary means of promoting change throughout the entire group process.

Summary

The perspectives described tend to complement each other in effective groups. Certain focuses may be primary in certain types of groups but the others serve a countering and balancing function in keeping group interaction relevant and therapeutic. Most groups with which the counselor works will utilize all of these focuses to some extent. The typical counseling group may run the full gamut of perspectives during its course. Guidance groups, though mainly concerned with the skills and social-value perspectives, will incorporate other focuses as well. Once again the needs of the members and the purposes of the group will determine the validity of the focus that the leader promotes in the group. The leader should not hesitate to redirect the focus when necessary to help groups engage in constructive interaction.

TYPOLOGY OF GROUP WORK

Group workers should have a specific awareness of the many different types of groups relevant to their particular settings. Effective groups in helping settings have in common process characteristics that we've discussed in previous chapters. But they also have unique attributes that differentiate them from each other and broaden the impact of the group process as a means of increasing the counselor's effectiveness. Generally, helping groups can be broken down into six major categories: guidance and life skills groups, counseling groups, psychotherapy groups, support and self-help groups, consultation groups, and growth groups. Each category has characteristics—in focus, leadership, size, and purpose—that distinguish it. General traits and characteristics of the broad categories in which each of these groups fit are delineated in Chapter 2. Each of these six major categories and respective types of each are presented on the following pages.

GUIDANCE AND LIFE SKILLS GROUPS

Guidance groups are primarily school oriented both conceptually and practically whereas life skills groups have broader applicability to any mental health practice or agency. Both use a similar format adapting content to the setting and clientele served. The process involved is that of "providing personally relevant information and skills and encouraging interpersonal interaction, discussion, and sharing in order to help group members understand themselves, their development, and their world, thereby facilitating effective decision-making, appropriate adjustment, and satisfactory personal growth" (Trotzer, 1980, p. 342). The types of guidance groups a counselor should be familiar with are large and small-group guidance, classroom meetings, guidance classes, human relations groups, and life skills groups.

Large-Group Guidance

Large-group guidance is primarily concerned with dispensing information to help in personal planning and decision-making. Emphasis is on presenting educational and vocational information of a personally relevant nature in an interesting manner to large numbers of clients who need the same information. Large-group guidance is used when information can be presented in a straightforward manner with little risk of misunderstanding. Methods usually involve a presentation in the form of films or lectures followed by an opportunity for discussion and questions. The process is content-oriented and cognitive in nature and stresses environmental factors as opposed to personal attributes. The leader generally presents the information and directs and controls discussion.

Large-group guidance can be effectively used in orientation and articulation situations to help clients understand a system and how to move through it. Although called large-group guidance, it is still advantageous to limit groups to a size where the counselor can keep tabs on how information is being received. A general rule of thumb is to work with groups no larger than the usual class size. Using groups larger than this may get the information to more people at one time but also may inhibit discussion to the extent that the process could become self-defeating. The length of time involved in these groups can vary from 15 minutes to an hour. Longer presentations result in diminishing returns due to the loss of client attention and interest. Large-group guidance also helps counselors give out general information in a relatively small amount of time, thus freeing the counselor to concentrate on other aspects of the group program.

Small-Group Guidance

Very often small-group guidance is an outgrowth of a large-group presentation. In a school situation, for instance, scheduling procedures may be explained in a large group, but the actual working out of an individual's schedule can be done in a small group. In fact, it is indeed strange that school counselors who are often saddled with scheduling responsibilities do not opt more frequently for handling this task in small groups rather than on a one-to-one basis. Time is saved and monotony is lessened for everyone. Small-group guidance allows clients to discuss their own situations and allows for asking specific questions. Clients who refuse to ask questions in a large group are much more willing to do so in a small group.

Emphasis in small-group guidance is on providing educational, vocational, and personal information. Methods, however, concentrate on the discussion aspect rather than on presentation, and efforts are made to involve all members in the interaction. The process is cognitive stressing both content and skills. Focus is on relating environmental and informational factors to personal goals, values, attitudes, and responsibilities. The leader alternately facilitates group discussion and presents information.

Small-group guidance is particularly useful in helping clients develop social skills and decision-making skills to help them be more successful in their lives. In addition, vocational and educational planning in small groups for members who have common interests and goals is an efficient use of counselor time. For example, clients desiring to explore common career areas can benefit from small-group guidance sessions, sharing their interests, concerns, and knowledge with other clients headed in the same direction. Generally small-group guidance is appropriate when clients are beginning to make specific use of information or need to develop some skill to enhance personal effectiveness. Group size should be restricted to eight to twelve members, because larger groups decrease the probability of interaction by the total group membership. Sessions of from one-half an hour to an hour tend to be sufficient, and frequency of meetings should depend on the topic discussed and the needs of group members.

The content and focus of most guidance groups in schools tend to be categorized in one of the following areas (Thompson & Poppen, 1979):

1. ***Self-concept development.*** Group sessions address the question of "Who am I?" They are designed to help participants deal with identity crises associated with growing up, develop positive self-concepts, and engage in self-exploration and values clarification.
2. ***Student self-discipline.*** The focus is on learning to be responsible for self and acting in a responsible manner toward others. Decision making and coping skills are often intrinsically involved.
3. ***Effective peer relations.*** The emphasis is on understanding and effectively coping with peer pressure and utilizing peer dynamics constructively. Exploration of the impact of peers on individuals is stressed and human relations skills are taught.
4. ***Effective interpersonal relationships with nonpeers.*** The focus is primarily on developing effective adult-child relationships and communication encompassing teacher-student, parent-child, and other such relationships that involve a transgenerational or hierarchical authority type of interaction.

5. ***Academic progress of all learners.*** The emphasis is on educational progress in orientation, articulation, and study skills. General educational information and requirements, or teaching specific learning skills, may be involved.

6. ***Career development.*** Educational-occupational information, career decision making, and vocational development are addressed for the purpose of helping participants make effective career choices.

7. ***Effective classroom or work environment.*** The focus is on developing a cooperative (cohesive) learning environment and a positive learning atmosphere characterized by effective communication.

   Within these broad categories specific group guidance programs are developed and tailored to the specific needs of participants and conditions of the environment (Trotzer, 1980).

Classroom Meetings

Classroom meetings utilize a ready-made group situation, although, of course, the situation is limited to schools. School counselors who conduct classroom meetings enhance their own roles in three ways:

1. By direct contact with the counselor, the students become more cognizant of who the counselor is and more familiar with the counselor role.

2. By becoming involved in the classroom milieu, counselors are kept aware of the kinds of experiences and pressures both students and teachers face, which makes them more sensitive to both groups.

3. By developing a working relationship with teachers, school counselors will perpetuate their impact as consultants and referral sources.

The general format and implementation of class meetings is best described by Glasser (1969). He discussed three main types of classroom meetings: (1) the social, problem-solving meeting where the goal is to change behavior, (2) the open-ended meeting where the goal is to change thinking, and (3) the educational-diagnostic meeting where the goal is to determine what students have learned and where weaknesses still exist.

Class meetings can facilitate the development of productive and positive classroom relationships and therefore should involve the entire class. By structuring the meetings into the regular routine students learn that they have a specific time when what they have to say takes precedence over what the teacher or counselor has to say.

Thompson and Poppen (1979) described seven types of classroom meetings based on their focus:

1. Involvement meetings: to promote student involvement and sense of belonging.

2. Rules and responsibilities meetings: to deal with class operational procedures and expectations.

3. Thinking meetings: to increase students' thinking and verbal abilities.

4. Values-clarification meetings: to clarify personal values and develop tolerance of differences.

5. Hypothetical dilemmas: to pose hypothetical problem situations and develop action plans.

6. Actual problem solving: to deal with real problems in the classroom.

7. Class council: to provide a vehicle for class governance (pp. 157-59).

Whatever the focus, the process is discussion-oriented with the goal of maximizing total student participation. Although the process is mainly cognitive, efforts are directed at finding out what the students think. The counselor serves as a facilitator of the discussion and as a model to the teacher who should be present in the class. In this way counselors help teachers develop their own skills so that eventually the counselor can bow out. The meetings should be at least 30 minutes in length but can vary depending on class involvement, topic of discussion, and leader time commitment. Frequency is a key factor. Glasser maintained that elementary school classes should have a class meeting every day. In secondary schools, one or two meetings a week is a realistic goal for counselors to strive. Thus the counselor's time must be carefully planned. To be effective he or she must develop a programmed sequence of conducting class meetings and training teachers so that as responsibility for one class meeting is turned over to its teacher another class can be added.

Guidance Classes

The oldest of any guidance technique was first proposed in the form of vocational guidance classes as part of the school curriculum. Through the years, however, the guidance class gradually became so routine, monotonous, and irrelevant that both counselors and students perceived it as no more than a necessary evil at best. However, with the recent emphasis on career, mental health, and psychological education, the guidance class is once again assuming its meaningful place in school curriculums. Guidance classes are basically courses taught by the counselor whose content and structure are based on guidance and counseling principles. They may be elective or required and usually last for one quarter or semester, during which time students consider personally relevant topics and information in both an experiential and academic manner. They also make use of what Schmuck and Schmuck (1971) called the "splendid myriad of different individual styles and emotional experiences" that make up a classroom group (p.4). For best results class size should be limited to approximately 20 people. The format of guidance classes is highly variable, depending on needs of students and the personality of the counselor. However, several forms enjoy fairly consistent emphasis and acceptance among counselors.

Career Guidance Classes. The career guidance class (Hoppock, 1976) helps students make vocational choices based on self-knowledge and knowledge about the world of work.

Students do various career projects, research numerous vocations, and assess their own vocational interests and abilities. Offshoots of this type of group are appearing in greater quantity throughout the educational process. The main purpose of these classes is to prepare students for a vocational adjustment that is personally satisfying and contributes meaningfully to society.

Feelings Classes. The feelings class as described by Faust (1968) has a guidance-class format that concerns itself with the affective domain of students' lives. The purpose of the class is to give attention to the emotional development of the student. Five main ideas are stressed:

1. Many kinds of feelings exist.
2. Nearly everyone experiences all the different feelings.
3. To have these feelings is all right.
4. Having a feeling is different from expressing a feeling.
5. Feelings can be expressed in ways that are not harmful to yourself or others, and in many cases these methods of expression are helpful.

Feelings classes should not be confused with sensitivity training or encounter groups. Rather they are to teach people that knowing how to express a feeling is as important as having the feeling in the first place. The leader must be able to work with clients' feelings in a constructive manner. Poppen and Thompson (1974) suggested a number of resources that may be useful to the counselor who wishes to conduct feelings classes.

"Knowing Me" Classes. In these classes students have an opportunity to learn how wonderfully complex and interesting they are as persons. Under the direction of the counselor they engage in a variety of self-assessment and interpersonal learning activities. They discuss results among themselves and hear presentations on various aspects of human development. These classes can be held for any age group, but they are particularly interesting to junior high students because they are in that no-man's land of preadolescence where change and the imminence of change are major factors in their experience. The leader must be adept in the psychology of the particular age group with whom he or she is working and have the ability to organize class sessions around the individual differences of class members.

Human-Relations Groups

Human awareness and human relations are becoming an increasingly important aspect of the group process. Within the context of education, Birnbaum (1969) stated that human-relations training "holds tremendous potential for improving education by dealing with affective components, reducing unnecessary friction between generations and creating a revolution in instruction by helping teachers to learn how to use the classroom group for learning purposes" (p. 82). Gazda (1971) added that we have a responsibility to educate children in human relations to prepare them to cope adequately with their ever expanding world. Not to do so would be a tragic and inexcusable mistake. In general, human-relations groups are a means of contributing to the psychological education of both children and adults. The counselor trained in group process has the resources to be in the forefront of this movement.

Human-relations groups can vary in size from six members to six dozen members; the larger groups are broken down into small subgroups all under the direction of one leader. Focus is on development of competencies in communication and relationship formation, and the process entails demonstration, experiential involvement in activities, and group discussion. Understanding and appreciating individual differences and similarities especially in terms of racial and cultural factors are stressed. The leader structures and guides interaction and facilitates discussion. Sessions are usually organized in a planned sequence and meet for a set number of times. They usually last one to three hours per session or are arranged in a workshop format of longer time periods. Members benefit from involvement in the sessions because the social skills and knowledge of self and others are immediately relevant to their lives.

Life Skills Groups

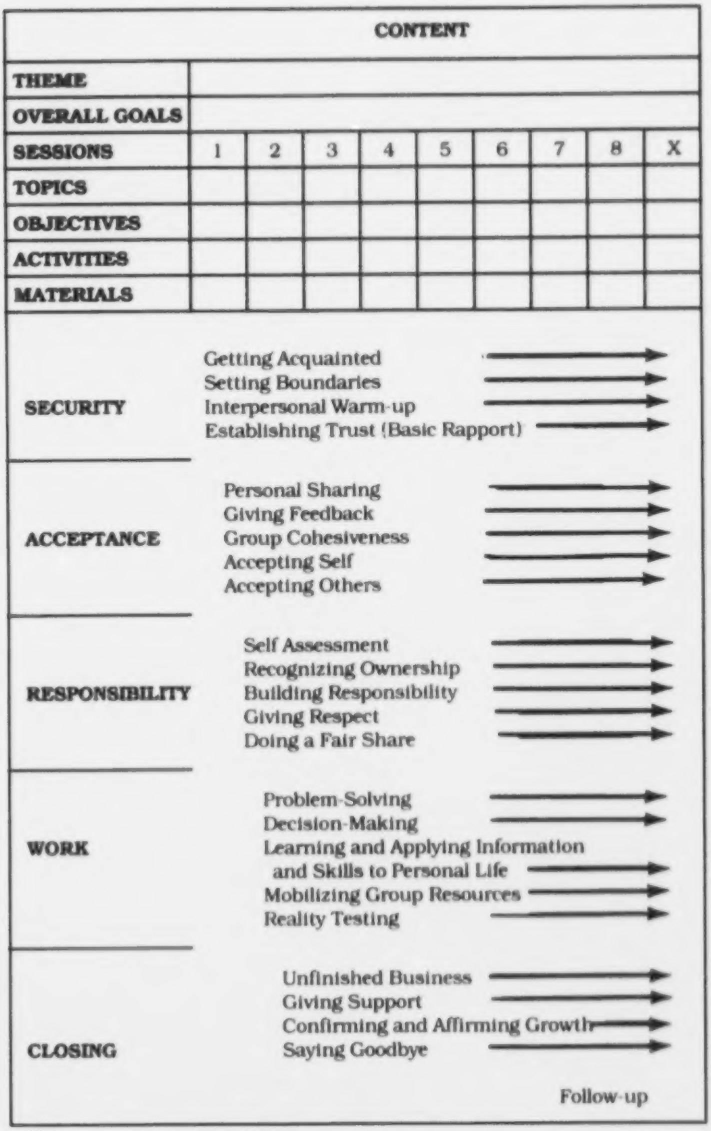
Life Skills groups have many labels but one basic commonality: they use a structured, experiential, group training format to teach participants specific skills that enable them to improve their life adjustment. Gazda has identified four generic life skills areas that delineate the content of these groups. They are

1. interpersonal communication or relationships,
2. fitness and health maintenance,
3. problem solving and decision making, and
4. establishing one's personal identity and life's purpose (Ritter, West, & Trotzer, 1987, p. 296).

Training programs in each of these skill areas can be developed that are applicable to four specific settings—community, home, school, and work. Numerous resources have been developed in the life skills area by leaders in the field such as George Gazda (Gazda, 1984; Gazda & Brooks, 1985) and David Johnson (Johnson, 1972; Johnson & Johnson, 1979; 1987). You also are referred to Drum and Knott's (1977) book *Structured Groups for Facilitating Development* as a prototype work in the life skills area.

The group process model described in Chapters 4 and 5 is a useful resource in organizing and planning groups of a guidance or life skills nature. In Figure 8.1 are presented the basic content and process components that provide a planning framework for these groups.

Content considerations include selection and development of a general theme based on the needs of the population to be served. Specifications of overall goals emanate from the theme. The nature of the goals brings the sequential order of the program into perspective, with each session addressing relevant topics. Specific objectives for each session are planned and topic-related information, activities, and materials are selected for presentation and discussion. Thus as participants move



CONTENT									
THEME									
OVERALL GOALS									
SESSIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	X
TOPICS									
OBJECTIVES									
ACTIVITIES									
MATERIALS									

SECURITY

Getting Acquainted
Setting Boundaries
Interpersonal Warm-up
Establishing Trust (Basic Rapport)

ACCEPTANCE

Personal Sharing
Giving Feedback
Group Cohesiveness
Accepting Self
Accepting Others

RESPONSIBILITY

Self Assessment
Recognizing Ownership
Building Responsibility
Giving Respect
Doing a Fair Share

WORK

Problem-Solving
Decision-Making
Learning and Applying Information and Skills to Personal Life
Mobilizing Group Resources
Reality Testing

CLOSING

Unfinished Business
Giving Support
Confirming and Affirming Growth
Saying Goodbye

Follow-up

Figure 8.1. Group guidance: Program development format.

through the sequence of sessions they engage in experiences that culminate in achievement of goals of the program, which, in turn, meet the needs for which the group was organized. However, structuring content is only part of the organizational task; it is the horizontal dimension of the model. The group process also must be accounted for in the planning of topics, selection of activities, and organization of sessions. Group process is the vertical dimension of the model. The sequential interaction between process and content form the basis for an effective group guidance program.

These developmental tasks provide criteria for selecting activities appropriate to the stage of development in which the group is. Accounting for process tasks increases the relevance of activities and facilitates movement to the next stage of the group process. The choice of activities, then, should be based on both process and content considerations. In other words, any activities chosen should facilitate the realization of both process and content objectives. For example, an initial session of a career guidance group might use a get-acquainted activity that includes sharing vocational goals along with other "who are you" tasks. Process and content thus are integrated, providing experiences and an atmosphere conducive to personalized learning relative to the focus of the group guidance program. Individual group sessions can be further organized and planned using phases of a group session described in Chapter 5.

COUNSELING GROUPS

The factor that distinguishes counseling groups from guidance groups is that they are problem-oriented and remedial in nature. Group counseling focuses on helping people explore and confront specific dissatisfactions in their lives with the express purpose of understanding their concerns and discovering and implementing ways of resolving their problems (Trotzer, 1972). The group leader attempts to develop an atmosphere in which members can talk openly about their problems without fear of rejection or reprisal. He or she encourages members to help each other, facilitates communication, protects individuals if that becomes necessary, and functions in many other ways that have already been described.

Since members feel safe and have the opportunity to both help and be helped, the process becomes one of conscientious concern for each other. This group also serves as a reality testing ground, where members can try out alternatives and obtain feedback about their probable success prior to attempting to make changes in the real world.

Since group counseling is the primary focus of this book, little additional information about it is necessary at this point. Group size should be limited to four to ten members to preserve the personal focus in the group. Verbal techniques and conscious awareness are emphasized, and groups meet as often and only for as long as is necessary to resolve problems. Sessions should last a minimum of one hour. The ideal length of time for sessions seems to be one and one-half to two hours. The focus of the group varies with the nature of the members' problems, and therefore group counseling is a quite flexible tool. The following descriptions of some types of counseling groups attests to this quality of flexibility.

Common-Problems Groups

The common-problems group (Blocher, 1966) uses the most typical of all group strategies. Most practitioners agree that homogeneous groups have many advantages. Members share concerns and therefore do not feel isolated from the experiences of others. Comments such as "I feel that too," "That's the same problem I have," "We're all in the same boat," and "I'm glad I'm not the only one who has that problem" abound in these groups. Members benefit by observing others working out problems similar to their own. This strategy is highly relevant because it can be adapted to any type of problem that a number of clients have in common. Examples include problems with drugs, dating, parents, children, and so forth. Certain variations can improve the effect of the group, such as using models or opening the group to new members as individuals resolve their problems and leave.

Case-Centered Groups

An alternative to the common-problems group is the case-centered group (Poppen & Thompson, 1974), which uses a problem-solving approach with a heterogeneous group. Whenever the focus is on a problem different from their own, other members are cast in the role of helpers, providing valuable feedback, information, and support based on their own experiences in overcoming that problem or simply offering assistance as interested, concerned, and objective helping persons. Diverse group membership is valuable for motivating interaction and maintaining group interest. Only in extreme circumstances where members' problems are so different that no basis exists for understanding one another is heterogeneity seriously disruptive to the group process. The only disadvantage is that some people may feel the other members cannot help them with their problems because they have not experienced them. Heterogeneous groups are often much more interesting to leaders, making the task of leadership more stimulating

Human-Potential Groups

Human-potential counseling groups (Otto, 1967) focus on personal strengths and positive resources of the person as a means of overcoming obstacles that are preventing them from realizing their potential. This type of group is unique due to the process involved. It can be utilized in homogeneous or heterogeneous groups and attempts to resolve problems by *concentrating on what individuals can do rather than what they can't do.* Members are asked to examine their resources and then apply those resources to their concerns. The key quality of this approach is that it counters effectively the negative connotations and feelings of inferiority usually associated with having problems. Even when group leaders do not adhere completely to this format they incorporate sessions stressing the positive for balance and perspective. By operating from a strength base members grow in self-esteem and self-confidence, improve their self-concepts, and take more positive attitudes toward changing their behavior, feelings, or attitudes to resolve their problems.

PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUPS

Therapy groups differ from counseling groups more on the basis of who is in them, who leads them, and where they take place than on the basis of process variations or therapeutic dynamics. Clients tend to be more dysfunctional and often carry a DSM IIIR type label. Leaders tend to have had their clinical training in situations that treat dysfunctional clients (often called patients), e.g., inpatient hospitals or day treatment programs. Leaders also tend to have higher level academic training and carry credentials as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, or pastoral counselors. The majority of therapy groups convene in agency, private practice, or hospital settings (inpatient or outpatient).

The factors that delineate counseling from therapy are described in Chapter 2. Yalom (1983) distinguished inpatient from outpatient group therapy differentiating process based on the level of functionality of the patients. Higher level inpatient groups meet for one hour and fifteen minutes during which time they work through a four phase process of (1) orientation/preparation, (2) agenda formation, (3) agenda for killing/filling, and (4) review of meeting. Lower level inpatient groups meet for only 45 minutes in somewhat smaller groups and work through the same phases but in a much more structured, leader activated manner.

Therapy groups also tend to be open ended and long term. In hospital settings they may meet daily and in outpatient situations they may meet more than once a week as well. For additional information on therapy groups you are referred to Yalom (1983 & 1985).

SUPPORT AND SELF-HELP GROUPS

Groups in this category are differentiated by the following traits:

1. group membership is homogeneous with each member experiencing or having experienced the particular problem that called the group into being,

2. peer support and assistance takes precedence over expert (professional) resources and assistance, and

3. if a leader is present, he/she is primarily a facilitator and/or also may be in need of the same support as the group members.

Pearson (1986) differentiated between mutual help/self-help groups and support groups on the basis of professional group leadership. He pointed out that any group that "truly functions as a group involves mutual help" (p. 66). Therefore, a distinction must be made between professionally organized and led groups which he calls "support groups" and groups which are couched in the context of "fellow sufferers giving aid to and receiving assistance from each other" (p. 66) which he calls "mutual help" or "self help" groups.

The rise of self help and mutual aid groups in contemporary society has been identified by Katz (1981) as an emerging social movement. He estimated that 500,000 self-help groups exist in the U.S. with a membership of 23 million people. Such observations make group workers take note. What is the appeal of these groups and in what capacity do professional group workers fit? Silverman's (1985) definition of mutual help groups gives us some clues to answer the first question.

> A mutual help group is an aggregate of people sharing a common problem or predicament who came together for mutual support and constructive action to solve their shared problem. The help offered is based on the participants' experience in coping with their problems and is not the result of any professional training or education group members possess.

The appeal, merit and practicality of these groups is based on members "having been there." Examples of such groups abound starting with Alcoholics Anonymous and all the other anonymouses (narcotics, gamblers, overeaters, etc.) Physical ailments (kidney transplants, cancer, spinal bifida), physical handicaps (paraplegics, amputees), and losses of various types (death, divorce) produce many mutual help and support groups. One of the more recent mutual help group movements is Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA).

While many such groups abound and are appealing, the role of the professional group leader is not all that clear. In fact, Shapiro and Shapiro (1985) warned that the trend toward population-specific specialization in group work has produced "an increased reliance on self-help and ingroup chauvinism" which is based on "an underlying notion that only someone who shares an affliction can successfully treat it"—a trend that is counter to the values and power of professional group work (p. 85). Traditionally competition, skepticism, and distrust have occurred as lay experts and professionals have vied for the same client turf. However, some positive shifts are occurring. Some of the reasons for the shift are the efforts to delineate between professionally led and non-professionally led groups, the sharing of expertise both ways and the concern for valid research to document therapeutic impact.

For more indepth discussion of this group category you are referred to the May, 1986 (Volume 11, Number 2) special issue of the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* edited by Richard Pearson and to Silverman's (1985) Chapter 12 on mutual help groups in the *Group Worker's Handbook* edited by Robert Conyne.

Peer-Facilitated Counseling Groups

An emerging development in group counseling that is gaining increasing acceptance in a wide range of environments from schools to prisons to community settings is the use of peer counselors as group leaders or co-leaders. Kranzow (1973) noted that in peer-facilitated groups members frequently are responsive to peer pressures and controls. Peer leaders tend to speak the same language literally and figuratively and members find it easier to identify with and trust the peer leader. Blaker and Samo (1973) pointed out that information gained from peers is usually more impressive than the same information provided by experts. Peer-led groups also are applicable to all age levels (Brown, 1965; Gumaer, 1973; Hamburg & Varenhorst, 1972; Vriend, 1969).

Counselors who utilize the peer-facilitator approach are themselves extremely important to its success. They must be involved in the selection and training of peer counselors and must be responsible for their supervision once the groups are under way. (Tindall, 1989; Tindall & Gray, 1985 & 1989). They serve as a referral source and as a resource in crisis situations. Counselors who pursue this course of action therefore are not going to make their own jobs easier but will be able to expand the helping function in their settings.

CONSULTATION GROUPS

The counselor's consultant role can be immensely expanded through effective use of the group process. As a group specialist the counselor's expertise can be utilized by larger numbers of people across varied settings. In fact, Reddy (1985) emphasized the utility of group expertise in the form of a rhetorical question: "Does 'group specialist' signify a profession or does it represent a set of skills to be used by a broad range of professionals in many different fields?" (p.105). For our purposes the answer is yes to both and the counselor's consultant function is his/her primary means of demonstrating it. In the schools, for example, parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals can all be conveniently gathered under the umbrella of consultation in the interest of improving their own effectiveness and promoting the welfare of clients. In business and industry consulting groups can be an integral part of EAP programs and personnel work (Kirby, 1985).

The leader in these groups performs many of the same functions as in counseling groups, only the purpose and composition of the group varies. Session length and duration are variable depending on the purpose for which the group is organized but usually one to one and one-half hours is a comfortable time period for individual sessions. Group size should be limited to six to ten members for optimum interaction and results. The two basic types of consulting groups are the case-centered consulting group and the C-group (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971).

Case-Centered Consultation Groups

The counselor organizes case-centered consultation groups when specific problem situations or cases arise that need the immediate attention of outside resources to facilitate resolution. Persons involved in these groups include significant others who have some direct relationship to the problem situation or person being discussed. Additional members should be drawn from resource personnel who have expertise that relates to the problem. The exact membership of the group, however, is dependent on the nature of the initiating problem.

The main focus in these groups is on clarifying the problem and the relationship of each member to it and then, through environmental manipulation involving a plan devised by members, acting to deal with that problem. The counselor's role is to facilitate discussion, contribute to it, and serve as a catalyst in getting the group to deal directly with the problem. The leader should first attempt to orient the group toward expressing their perceptions about the problem. Once understanding and consensus has been largely achieved, the leader then can turn the group to consideration of alternative solutions leading to a specific plan of action. (Kirby, 1985). If effectively conducted these groups can have a definite impact on improving communication and developing respect between the various participants.

C-Groups

The C-group, developed by Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971), combines didactic and experiential procedures to provide group members with practical, relevant training that is generalizable to their lives. This approach is labeled C-group because many of the factors that account for its success begin with C. These components are described as follows:

1. The group *collaborates*, works together on mutual concerns.
2. The group *consults*. The interaction within the group helps members develop new approaches to relationships with children.
3. The group *clarifies* for each member what it is he/she really believes and how congruent or incongruent his/her behavior is with what he/she believes.
4. The group *confronts*. The group expects each individual to see their own self, purposes, attitudes and to be willing to confront other members of the group.
5. The group is *concerned* and *cares*. It shows that it is involved with both children and group members.

> 6. The group is *confidential* insofar as personal material discussed in the group is not carried out of the group.
>
> 7. The group develops a *commitment to change*. Participants in the group are concerned with recognizing what they can really only change themselves. They are expected to develop a specific commitment which involves an action they will take before the next C-group meeting to change their approach to a problem. (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, pp. 272-273)

This type of consulting group is useful for all professionals in the helping fields. Participants can develop their helping skills and work out solutions to common problems. Within the school, it's particularly useful for teachers. The reemergence of the teacher-advisor system stresses the need for teachers to develop their helping and group-leadership skills.

The C-group can be an effective method of working with families. It can help parents develop the ability to relate to their children and find creative solutions to their problems. The counselor can use these groups to help these people realize they have much in common with other parents and also have the ability to help each other overcome their problems in raising children. The C-group model is also adaptable to business/industry and professional agencies where supervisors, co-workers and colleagues can be assembled for purposes of addressing common problems and issues.

GROWTH GROUPS

Growth groups are organized for the purpose of helping psychologically healthy people become more sensitive, aware, fully-functioning, and self-actualized through the use of the group process. Members are assumed to be responsible for themselves and capable of handling ambiguous situations and intense personal interaction. They "grow" by expanding their levels of personal effectiveness.

A great deal of controversy exists over what constitutes a growth group. Certainly titles are no indication of what is involved in the process. The most common types of growth groups, however, are the sensitivity group or T-group and the encounter group. Although commentaries on each of these groups abound, the terminology tends to be so similar that it is often difficult to ferret out distinctions.

One distinction is that the T-group has a distinct point of origin with the National Training Laboratory (NTL) in Bethel, Maine. Therefore it has an eminently traceable history, whereas the encounter group has grown out of a broad range of social and psychological endeavors. Significant contributions have certainly been made by Gestalt psychology, by Carl Rogers, and by institutes such as Esalen in Big Sur, California, but the encounter movement is still a melting pot in which influences are quickly subsumed. Beyond that distinction, however, the encounter group places its primary emphasis on the individual's growth in the group, while sensitivity groups stress individual learning and learning about the group process as well. From this point on, differences become more a matter of degrees than contrasts. Encounter groups use more confrontation, while T-groups emphasize awareness, sensitivity, and learning about self and others. Birnbaum (1969) affirmed that in encounter groups "emphasis is on direct exposure of beliefs and feelings that usually are not put on public display by individuals. The objective is to stimulate an exchange that is inhibited by a minimum of reserve and defensiveness in order to achieve a maximum of openness and honesty" (p. 83). Encounter groups on the whole tend to be more intense and emotional than sensitivity groups. Encounter groups lean toward a problem-oriented focus while T-groups tend to be more process oriented. This focus on process is implied in the definition of a T-group by Bradford, Gibb, and Benne (1964):

> A T-group is a relatively unstructured group in which individuals participate as learners. The data for learning are not outside these individuals or remote from their immediate experience with the T-group. The data are transactions among members, their own behavior in the group, as they struggle to create a productive and viable organization, a miniature society. (p. 1)

Similarities associated with all growth groups are numerous. They are characterized by open, close, direct psychological contact that stresses spontaneity, freedom of expression, and intense interaction. The focus is on the here-and-now action of the group, and ambiguity is commonly used to generate interaction. Methods utilize verbal and nonverbal techniques aimed at expanding the members' conscious awareness and zeroing in on their feelings and perceptions. One of the major issues in growth groups is the development of trust so that members can be truly themselves in the group. The time span of growth groups is usually brief but intense, ranging from two-week workshops and weekends during which members spend many hours together to ongoing sessions over a specific period of time. Spending hours together without interruption often heightens the intensity of interaction. Finally, growth groups are face-to-face groups with no organizational structure and no imposed tasks that rely heavily on feedback and reinforcement as the tools for self-learning.

Growth groups peaked in popularity during the mid-1960s and early 1970s and in retrospect created two major issues for the field of group work (Dies, 1985). The distinction between growth and remediation was blurred and many of the leaders particularly of the more intensive group experiences had dubious credentials. Thus the issue of quality control always must be raised with growth groups relative to both the nature of the experience and the leadership.

Vriend (1985) denoted the critical importance of this issue by delineating between the encounter group model (model B) and the counseling group model (model A). Encounter groups develop their own norms and content, evolve through inevitable stages, function with a facilitator who guides the process but does not determine its nature and cause (allow) change in members. Counseling groups presuppose a trained group leader who takes responsibility for and determines the structure of the experience, who teaches group members therapeutic group behavior and bases interventions on a rationale emanating from counseling theory (p. 66). He contended that training group leaders must be based on the counseling group model for the profession to survive.

Growth Groups in Schools

The encounter group per se has no relevance to the vast majority of counseling programs in schools because of its intense confrontative nature, its assumption of adult maturity, and the time arrangements required to use it. And the impact of encounter groups is hard to determine. Birnbaum (1969) points out this basic weakness, "Because of the failure to follow through with concrete plans for specific action, it [the encounter group] too often remains a memorable experience, but not one that produces change" (p. 96). Some of the encounter methods, however, are useful to the group counselor and can be integrated into group counseling to the mutual benefit of the members and the group process.

Sensitivity groups also have little general relevance to the school. This is mainly because of the misconceptions people have about T-groups, as well as for some of the same reasons noted above. However, in specific situations and in certain clearly defined areas a case can be made for using them. Because T-groups stress both self-learning and understanding of the group process they can help well-adjusted students to become more cognizant of their own self-characteristics and improve their human-relations skills. As a social laboratory, it allows group members to gain insight into their own behavior, develop better understanding of others, and increase their awareness of processes that help and hinder group action. Schmidt (n.d.) described two basic T-group concepts that give the method advantages:

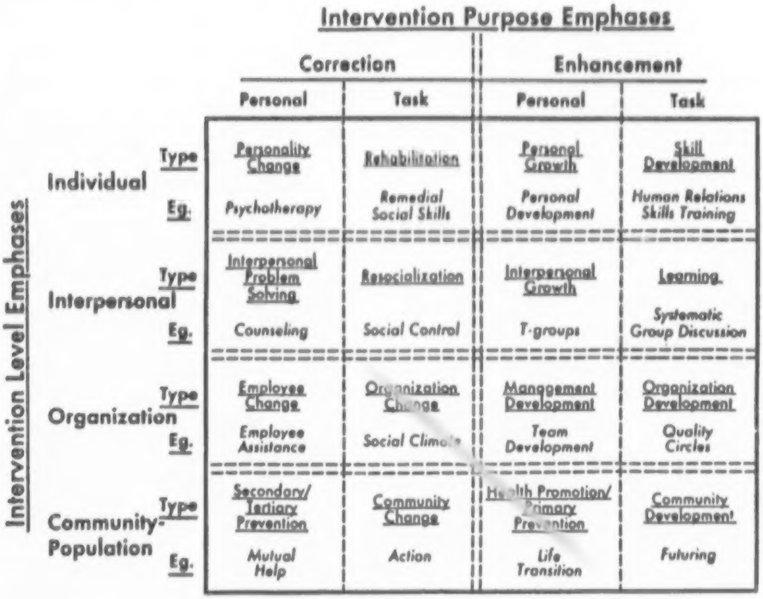
1. People can learn best about themselves by producing behavior, becoming aware of that behavior, analyzing the behavior and its consequences, and then drawing generalizations.

2. People can learn about their own assumptions and values by being placed in a setting where there is considerable ambiguity. The ambiguity permits them to project their own meanings into the situation and to compare their projections with those of their colleagues.

If counselors do decide to use sensitivity-type groups, the best procedure is to label with a less auspicious title and clarify precisely the nature of the process and its objectives before starting the groups.

CONYNE'S TYPOLOGY OF GROUP WORK GRID

Conyne (1985) has made an admirable effort to categorize the variety in group work by creating the *Group Work Grid* presented in Figure 8.2. Responding to the observation that "generally missing from our major texts (on group work) is attention to the range of group experiences available today" (p. X), he created this matrix to conceptualize group work as a means of expanding the horizon of group work and consolidating practical understanding about group work. The *Group Work Grid* is comprised of two major interactive dimensions: (1) the purpose of the group work intervention and (2) the level of the group work intervention. "Purpose" is further delineated into correction and enhancement and "level" is divided into individual, interpersonal, organizational, and community sub-categories. Within the purpose dimension is embedded the process factor of whether the group is personal



			Intervention Purpose Emphases			
			Correction		Enhancement	
			Personal	Task	Personal	Task
Intervention Level Emphases	Individual	Type	Personality Change	Rehabilitation	Personal Growth	Skill Development
		Eg.	Psychotherapy	Remedial Social Skills	Personal Development	Human Relations Skills Training
	Interpersonal	Type	Interpersonal Problem Solving	Resocialization	Interpersonal Growth	Learning
		Eg.	Counseling	Social Control	T-groups	Systematic Group Discussion
	Organization	Type	Employee Change	Organization Change	Management Development	Organization Development
		Eg.	Employee Assistance	Social Climate	Team Development	Quality Circles
	Community-Population	Type	Secondary/ Tertiary Prevention	Community Change	Health Promotion/ Primary Prevention	Community Development
		Eg.	Mutual Help	Action	Life Transition	Futuring

Figure 8.2. Conyne's Group Work Grid.

(psyche process) or task (socio process) in orientation. The result is a working model of group typology that has both breadth and depth. Each section of the grid represents a type of group that is explicated in the book Conyne edited and entitled, *The Group Worker's Handbook: Varieties of Group Experience* to which you are referred for further understanding of both the variety of groups and their specific nature.

CLIENT POPULATIONS AND GROUP WORK

The interaction between specific client populations and settings is another basis for delineating groups. Each client group and setting favors the group process with unique dynamics and characteristics that leaders must take into account and work with to generate effective therapeutic impact. The parameters of this book do not allow for explication of the almost endless variety of group possibilities based on population and setting, but Seligman (1982) has made an estimable attempt to present a representative sample. A review of Seligman's (1982) book *Group Psychotherapy and Counseling With Specific Populations* follows and you are referred to it as an adjunctive resource in differentiating group work (Trotzer, 1984).

Seligman drew together the contributions of 18 different authors to present a comprehensive and varied picture of group work with special populations. In each chapter is presented characteristics of the particular population being addressed and indicates how the group process takes those traits into account. Information is clinically relevant and substantiated by theory and research. Given the variety of topics and number of contributors, the consistency and quality of writing is high. Group practitioners who work with special populations addressed will find this book a practical resource and group specialists with general rehabilitative interests will appreciate the variety. Fourteen different client populations are presented including stroke victims, physically disabled, aged, visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded, cancer victims, psychiatrically disabled, alcohol abusers, drug abusers, prisoners, adolescents, severely disabled, and parents of exceptional children. Additional chapters including an overview of group work, vocational group work, and leaderless groups complete the book. Strengths of the book are chapters addressing populations with specific rehabilitative characteristics. Differentiating group work with alcohol abusers and drug abusers into separate chapters is a good facet of the book. However, chapters on adolescents and leaderless groups seem out of the mainstream of the book's emphasis. The chapter on vocational groups is quite comprehensive and worthwhile addition. The chapter on group work with prisoners has clinical interest but is written entirely without bibliographic references. As a revision of an earlier work, the significant changes and additions will make this book a standard resource for group workers and educators in the rehabilitative field.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities can be used to compare and contrast the basic characteristics of socio-psyche-process groups. First, divide the class into small groups of four to eight members. Depending on the number of groups you have, give half the groups a socio-process activity such as the NASA space project and the other groups a psyche-process activity like the "here-and-now-face." Next, repeat the process, reversing the activities. Follow-up discussion should focus on distinctions and similarities of the two processes. In additional discussion, the class should compare the effects of having one process precede the other. In this way elements of leadership strategy in using these processes can be identified.

NASA Space Project

The materials for this socio-process activity are in Figures 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5. First, administer the decision form (Figure 8.3) individually to each group member. After each person has completed an evaluation of the items, give the group another decision form and read the instructions for decision by consensus (Figure 8.4). Instruct the group to fill out the group decision form based on the discussion in the group. Under no circumstances should individuals change their own answers. After the group has completed the task, give them the key (Figure 8.5) and have them calculate their individual scores by totaling the absolute value of the difference between their ranking and the key's ranking on each item. The instructor can calculate the group score as a means of demonstration if he or she wishes. The lower the scores the more accurate the ranking of the items in terms of their practical relevance on the moon. Have the group answer questions such as the following:

1. Was the group or the individual more effective in performing the task?
2. Who emerged as the leader in the group?
3. Who seemed to be the expert in the group?
4. Who talked most and least in the group discussion?
5. Who seemed to get the group to accept his or her opinion most often? How did he or she do it?

You may wish to have members discuss these questions prior to determining their scores and then use the scores as a means of assessing the accuracy of the group's perception.

Here-and-Now-Face

The here-and-now-face (Kranzow, 1973) is a psyche-process activity designed to help members disclose and discuss their feelings and emotions. Instruct the members to draw a face that represents the feelings they are experiencing at the present time. Below the face have them write a verbal description of those feelings and the reasons for them. The disucssion should include both "what" the feelings are and "why" they exist in the person at the present time. Some leaders use a format statement like "I am feeling (member fills in what) because (member fills in why)." This activity is a means of generating a discussion of the importance of feelings in our lives and brings the group into personal contact with one another.

Cooperation Squares

Cooperation is one of the key components of any task-oriented group, and this activity focuses specifically on the

(Continued on page 351)

NASA DECISION FORM

Instructions: You are a member of a space crew scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. During reentry and landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip. Below are listed the 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank order them in terms of their importance in allowing your crew to reach the rendezvous point. Place the number 1 by the most import item, number 2 by the second most important, and so on through number 15, the least important.

________ Box of matches

________ Food concentrate

________ 50 feet of nylon rope

________ Parachute silk

________ Portable heating unit

________ Two .45 caliber pistols

________ One case dehydrated Pet milk

________ Two 100 pound tanks of oxygen

________ Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)

________ Life raft

________ Magnetic compass

________ 5 gallons of water

________ Signal flares

________ First-aid kit containing injection needles

________ Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

Figure 8.3. NASA Decision Form.

From "Lost on the Moon: A Decision Making Problem." *Today's Education*, 1969, 58(2), 55-56. Reprinted by permission of the National Education Association.

DECISION BY CONSENSUS (NASA)

Research in group dynamics has revealed that the manner in which groups utilize their member resources is a critical determinant of how they perform. In this exercise you are asked to use the technique of group consensus. This means that the ranking for each of the 15 survival items must be agreed upon by each member before it becomes a part of the group decision. Consensus is difficult to reach. Therefore, not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval. Unanimity, however, is not a goal (although it may be achieved unintentionally), and it is not necessary, for example, that every person be as satisfied as he might be if he had complete control over what the group decides.

What should be stressed is the individual's ability to accept a given ranking on the basis of logic—whatever his/her level of satisfaction—and his/her willingness to entertain such a judgment as feasible. When the point is reached at which all group members feel this way as a minimal criterion, you may assume that you have reached a consensus as it is defined here and the judgment may be entered as a group decision. This means, in effect, that a single person can block the group, if he/she thinks it necessary; at the same time, it is assumed that this option will be employed in the best sense of reciprocity. Here are some guidelines to use in achieving consensus:

1. Avoid arguing for your own ranking. Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but consider seriously the reactions of the group in any subsequent presentations of the same point.
2. Avoid "win-lose" stalemates in the discussion of rankings. Discard the notion that someone must win and someone must lose in the discussion; when impasses occur, look for the next most acceptable alternative for both parties.

Figure [illegible].4. Decision by consensus (NASA).

From *Decision by Consensus*, by Jay Hall. Reprinted by permission of Jay Hall, Ph.D., author and Telemetrics International, publisher.

Figure 8.4. Continued.

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3. Avoid changing your mind only in order to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. Withstand pressures to yield that have no objective or logically sound foundation. Strive for enlightened flexibility; avoid outright capitulation.

4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as the majority vote, averaging, bargaining, coin-flipping, and the like. Treat differences of opinion as indicative of an incomplete sharing of relevant information on someone's part and press for additional sharing either about task or emotional data, where it seems in order.

5. View differences of opinion as both natural and helpful rather than as a hindrance in decision-making. Generally, the more ideas expressed, the greater the likelihood of conflict will be; but the richer the array of resources will be as well.

6. View initial agreement as suspect. Explore the reasons underlying apparent agreements; make sure that people have arrived at similar solutions for either the same basic reasons or for complementary reasons before incorporating such solutions in the group decision.

7. Avoid subtle forms of influence and decision modification; for example, when a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that he must be "rewarded" by having his/her own way on some later point.

8. Be willing to entertain the possibility that your group can excel at its decision task; avoid doom-saying and negative thinking.

NASA KEY

Little or no use on moon	15	Box of matches
Supply daily food required	4	Food Concentrate
Useful in tying injured together, help in climbing	6	50 feet of nylon rope
Shelter against sun's rays	8	Parachute silk
Useful only if party landed on dark side	13	Portable heating unit
Self-propulsion devices could be made from them	11	Two .45 caliber pistols
Food, mixed with water for drinking	12	One case dehydrated Pet Milk
Fill respiration requirement	1	Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen
One of the principal means of finding directions	3	Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)
CO bottles for self-propulsion across chasms, etc.	9	Life raft
Probably no magnetized poles; thus, useless	14	Magnetic compass
Replenishes loss by sweating, etc.	2	5 gallons of water
Distress call when line of sight possible	10	Signal flares
Oral pills of injection medicine	7	First-aid kit containing injection needles
Distress signal transmitter; possible communication with mother ship	5	Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

Figure 8.5. NASA key for activity in Figure 8.3.

From "Lost on the Moon: A Decision-Making Problem," *Today's Education*, 1969, 58(2), 55-56. Reprinted by permission of the National Education Association.

factors involved in working together. Make puzzle squares out of cardboard, following the patterns illustrated in Figure 8.6. Six-inch squares are a satisfactory size. Divide the class into groups of five and give each group a package containing five envelopes with equal numbers of pieces but from different puzzles, (five different puzzles to a group). Then read the following instructions and rules

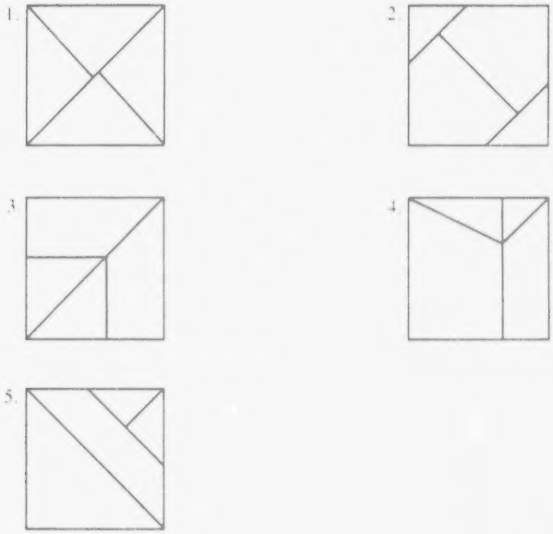

Figure 8.6. Puzzle designs.

In this package are five envelopes, each of which contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the leader gives the signal to begin, it is the task of your group to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each member has a perfect square of the same size as that held by the other members. The following rules must be followed in working on the problem:

1. No member may speak. The task is to be completed entirely without words.

2. No member may ask another member for a puzzle piece or in any way signal that another person is to give her or him a piece.

3. Members may, however, give pieces to other members.

The instructor's task is to see that the rules are adhered to. Follow-up discussion generated by this activity usually centers around the importance of cooperation and communication in effective group functioning. Conversation may also turn to a consideration of good and bad rules.

Life-Picture Map

This psyche-process activity (Kranzow, 1973) is oriented toward helping members develop the time-competence perspective so important in self-actualization (Johnson, 1972). Ask group members to draw an illustrated road map that represents their past, present, and future. The map should pictorially depict experiences the members have had, obstacles they have overcome, what their present lives are like, what their goals are for the future, and what barriers stand in the way of accomplishing those goals. Upon completion of the drawings, have the members share their maps with the group, explaining the various illustrations. Follow-up discussion should just be allowed to evolve from a consideration of the pictures.

Paint-a-Group Picture

This activity essentially combines many of the elements of both psyche-process and socio-process groups. It focuses on the nature of the group itself, its personality and atmosphere, but uses a task approach to do so. Divide the total group into groups of four to eight, and supply the subgroups with paper and paints (crayons also will suffice) and ask them to paint a picture as a team that reflects the personality of the subgroup. The picture should be creative and integrate individual efforts. Some leaders require the groups to decide on a group name and sign the picture with it. Materials need not be limited to just paints either. The group can use a variety of mediums to make a group sculpture or group collage. Discussion should revolve around the experiences of group members in this activity. Feelings of shyness, embarrassment, and artistic inferiority are common. Information about who got the choice spot on the painting, the role of wit, and who emerged as leader also are germane to the discussion. If several groups have participated, each group can present and explain their picture to the rest and describe the interaction that took place.

Eight Topics for Group Discussion

The following eight topics are useful in generating personal discussion, particularly in groups in class meetings and guidance classes, and also can be used effectively in determining the locale of problems. The topics can be handled one at a time or in combination. Members can use them in interviewing each other, or they can be incorporated into a general group exercise to stimulate discussion.

1. List three people who have influenced you greatly in your life.
2. Briefly describe three experiences you have had that you feel you will remember the rest of your life.
3. List three things that you are particularly good at.
4. List three things that really interest you.
5. List three things that you would like to accomplish in the future.
6. List three decisions you have made that have changed your life in some way.
7. List three values or beliefs that are important to you and that you live by.
8. List three problems that you have right now that you have not been able to resolve.

The number of things required in each instruction can vary, and directions can be added or substituted depending on the leader's interests and the nature of the group. How each topic is handled is also the prerogative of the leader.

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Chapter 9

ORGANIZING GROUP COUNSELING

Any amount of group knowledge, training, and experience is useless if counselors cannot implement the group process into the framework of their work environments. Even the most conscientious and enthusiastic attempts to use groups will fail if appropriate methods of organizing a group program are not utilized.

PERSPECTIVE OF THE COUNSELOR: OUTREACH

To effectively organize a group counselors need to develop a dynamic perspective on their role and function. That perspective can be basically summarized as "outreach." "Too often, we [counselors] have donned our clinical robes within the safe confines of a remote office and waited for the world to beat a path to our door. The counselor who would work with groups cannot afford the luxury of solitude—it is he/she who must make contact with. . .possible clientele" [Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, p. 140].

The counselor must take the responsibility for building a group program based on the knowledge and confidence that the group approach has a great deal to offer. In all probability, most administrators, staff members, and clients will be cognizant of neither the potential of the group process nor the counselor's own expertise in that area.

Another reason for the outreach perspective is to assure the counselor of a solid foundation on which to build a group program. Too often counselors filled with professional zeal have ventured forth on group missions without a clear conception of objectives in mind and have found themselves in the deep water of professional criticism without a lifeboat of accountability to rescue them. To establish groups simply on the merit of the group process itself is not sufficient. As Mahler (1969) pointed out, the fundamental question that must be asked is "for what purpose is this group being organized?" The outreach perspective provides necessary information about needs so that accurate and clearly defined goals can be established to answer that question. Outreach is the key because it enables the counselor to enter the domain of clients, to penetrate their life spaces, and make contact directly with elements causing their problems. In this manner counselors can not only clarify their own roles and the nature of the group process but also can make both of them relevant to their clientele and their environment.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the counselor with practical methods for setting up a group program. The full gamut of administrative procedures related to group organization and composition are considered. Material for this chapter relies heavily on an experiential basis bolstered by the ever increasing empirical foundation provided by group research. In many cases definitive guidelines for use in organizing group programs remain in a formative state. However, the wealth of clinical knowledge derived from practice provides an invaluable resource in lieu of and in conjunction with research findings (Corey, 1985; Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1979; Gazda, 1984; Jacobs, Harvill, & Masson, 1988; Mahler, 1969; Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988; Yalom, 1985).

Organizational development of group programs is discussed from the perspective of schools or institutional settings and embellished with considerations from agency/practice settings.

DETERMINING THE NEED

The best way to get a group program off on the right foot is to determine where a need for one exists. Counselors should never organize groups simply because it is part of their professional role or because counselor educators have told them to do so. Groups should only be proposed after the counselor has done some background investigation to determine what the problems are and whether they can be effectively worked with using a group approach. Counselors have many sources of information in this regard, and they should make use of all of them to obtain as comprehensive a picture of needs and problems as possible. In school situations the major sources are students (potential clients), faculty, administrators, families and cumulative record folders. In agency/practice settings clients and referral sources such as physicians, pastors, attorneys, and professional colleagues both in and out of your own setting are useful resources. In conducting this needs assessment successfully the counselor must keep two guidelines in mind: (1) the nature of the approach must be "outreach," going out to make contact with the various populations and talking with them on their home ground; and (2) the purpose of this contact is to *listen* and *understand* not to suggest. After the counselor has accumulated input and evaluated it carefully, then the time is right for suggestions.

Potential Clients

Potential clients are the most obvious sources of information and in many respects the most accurate. In schools, of course, the potential clients are students. School counselors can use their normal role contacts with students in guidance and counseling situations to develop a conception of the general concerns and problems of the population they work with. This in itself is not enough, however, since many students will never darken the door of a counselor's office for any reason. The counselor must get out and mingle with students, holding informal conversations with them in the areas where students congregate, such as the student commons, the gym, or hallways. Setting up rap sessions in some classes simply to get student opinions is effective, and even establishing a rap corner or rap room near student gathering places so they can drop by and chat is helpful.

More formal procedures might involve the use of survey instruments. Open-ended questionnaires that stimulate reactions (including statements like "the thing I worry most about is. . . .") can be used anonymously to tap client opinions of needs. Problem checklists, your own or standardized ones like the Mooney Problem Checklist, can be administered to determine what areas give clients the most concern. In many cases to design the survey instrument yourself is preferable because you can include items that are appropriate to the unique environment in which you work. Another effective method is to use the "agree-disagree" format (see Figure 2.4) and design statements dealing with specific problem areas (like problems with parents) and then let the clients come up with their own conception of the most accurate statements. In these ways the counselor can determine whether the group approach is appropriate or not and for what reasons.

In agency/practice settings one's own caseload is the most viable source of potential group members especially as individual cases emerge that have commonality or needs that are conducive to a group approach.

Faculty Referral Sources

Another school source of valuable information that often goes untapped is the teachers. Yet teachers represent an aggregate of individuals whose cumulative experience in relating to students far surpasses that of any other group. The counselor who cultivates a positive working relationship with them, meets them on their own ground (classroom, lounge, and homes), and approaches them with a sincere interest in learning from their experience will find the results beneficial. Counselors can use many approaches to obtain vital information from teachers. They can ask permission to attend various department meetings and listen as they discuss problems of their particular area of interest and expertise. Organizing voluntary rap sessions during coffee breaks and free periods also can be effective. Socializing with them is still the most accepted and best informal way of making contact. Some counselors have developed suggestion boxes so students and teachers can express their concerns and ideas to the counselor. Developing this relationship with teachers helps them feel more a part of the process of organizing the group program rather than feeling it is imposed on them. They begin to be supportive of it rather than threatened by it.

In agency/practice settings directly contacting referral sources to solicit their input as to the types of problems that need attention can be very productive. Once referral sources realize your interest and expertise is emanating from input from them, both your relationship and your client referrals will improve.

Administrators

Sitting down with school administrators, such as the principal or vice-principal, for a few minutes of "straight talk" will usually produce positive results. Administrators inevitably have a pet group of students they are particularly concerned about (usually because they are a pain in the neck and represent the educational system's failure to work or are a threat to it). If the counselor approaches the administration indicating an interest in helping and a concern for the problem, administrators will usually level, even if they have reservations about counseling or the group process. The counselor must be careful not to make any promises at this point, however, since that might create expectations that are unrealistic. The information received should be contemplated for a time before the counselor returns with positive suggestions and alternatives. Counselors who approach administrators this way often realize greater respect and support from the administration. Administrators soon realize the counselor is making efforts to help students and also to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the school. Colleagues and administrators in agency/practice environments can provide the same type of input as schools officials.

Families

Families represent another source of information for counselors. Counselors in schools find students' parents especially helpful, but more difficult to contact than other sources. The counselor can make use of incidental contacts with parents to garner their opinions and can use the consultation function with parents to do so, as well. Questionnaires, preferably brief, can be sent to parents and usually result in an adequate percentage of returns. The counselor's participation in parent programs, parent nights, and parent school organizations (for example, parent-teacher associations) is valid use of counselor time. Counselors can organize rap sessions around topics related to student problems, use the "agree-disagree" strategy, and conduct surveys as part of the regular agenda. In any case families should always be considered as a source of information, since their perspectives are definitely a factor in many of the concerns clients will express in counseling groups.

Cumulative Record Folders

Within schools, counselors can find information in student cum folders that is valuable to needs assessment with respect to groups. The best approach is to do it in an organized manner, using a specific set of criteria for determining problems. If the counselor can organize guidelines for the kind of data being looked for, an aide can do the work of tabulating. Using cum folders can often become tedious and yield minimal results, especially if a scatter-gun approach is used. The best method is probably to define specific problem behaviors and then accumulate frequencies based on comments and data in the student records. However, with the change in public records laws this source of information will probably become less informative and less useful.

Examples of data that provide cues to needs groups may address are demographics on single parent and remarried families where adjustment factors related to death or divorce and blended family living are prominent, coded children who have learning disabilities which often contain an adjustment component and absences which may cue problem situations.

Once the counselor has accumulated information from all these sources and evaluated it, a decision can be made, based on needs, as to how groups can be used and what specific problems will be addressed. At this point the counselor is ready to take the next step of setting goals and recontacting the various groups to inform them of program proposals.

ESTABLISHING GOALS

Goals are extremely important to group counseling because they provide a direction for which both the leader and members are aware, and they provide an appropriate yardstick for assessing the value of the group experience. They fall into two major categories—general group goals and specific individual goals. ***General goals*** refer to the overall objectives of the group and are the basic reasons for which it is formed. ***Specific goals*** are those directly related to individual members and their personal lives. The relationship between the two has been expressed by Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971): "The group counselor and the group must be flexible enough to allow individuals to work on personal concerns, and broad general goals of the group must not be so rigid that the individual is sacrificed to some theoretical construct" [p. 139].

The most important consideration is to first determine if group counseling is the most appropriate means of dealing with problems revealed by the needs assessment and then to make sure that goals are in accord with and matched to the needs of clients. The counselor's professional judgment must be utilized in this process. Mahler (1969) pinpointed a number of situations that lend themselves to individual counseling, group counseling, or both; they provide useful guidelines in making the decision to use group counseling. These situations are detailed in Figure 9.1. Counselors are not to view group counseling as a cure-all; however, they are to make specific professional decisions for or against its use. In this way the possibility of success is enhanced and the usefulness of the group approach assured.

Some of the general goals that have relevance to group counseling are as follows:

> to develop relationships that will help individual members meet their developmental and psychological needs;
>
> to help members in their identity-seeking process (Mahler, 1969);
>
> to help members change undesirable behaviors (Dustin & George, 1973);
>
> to help members develop social skills and resolve problems in social relationships;

Individual counseling tends to be more appropriate:

1. When the client has a crisis problem that is very complicated, both as to causes and possible solutions.
2. When confidentiality is highly essential to protect the client and others.
3. When working through the meaning of test results in terms of one's self-concept.
4. When fear of talking in a group is so extreme that the person does not seem to be able to get started in the group.
5. When an individual is grossly ineffective in relating to his peers and sets off such a strong immediate reaction that the group is more likely to be rejective than acceptant.
6. When a person's awareness and understanding of his own feelings, motivations, and patterns of behavior are very limited or so complicated that he feels lost and unable to share in a group.
7. When sexual behavior, particularly of a deviate nature, is involved.
8. When one's need for attention and recognition is too extreme to be managed in the group situation.

Group counseling tends to be more valuable in the following areas:

1. Learning to better understand a variety of other people, and finding out how others perceive things.
2. Learning a deeper respect for other people, particularly those who are different in many ways from oneself.
3. Gaining greater social skills in talking and relating to others.
4. Learning to share with other people, especially gaining a deeper sense of belonging from participation in a group in which one is a respected and accepted member.
5. Being free to talk about concerns, problems, values, and ideas with others who are facing similar situations.

Figure 9.1. Situational Guidelines for the Use of Individual Counseling, Group Counseling, or Both

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Figure 9.1. Continued.

6. Getting several persons' reactions to one's problems and concerns.
7. Finding support from a group of peers, which is often of greater value to a student than support from an interested adult.
8. Giving each person an opportunity to spend more time with a counselor.
9. Being able to involve oneself rather slowly in the counseling process and to withdraw partially if a discussion become too threatening.
10. Giving the counselor a chance to see clients in a broader and more active social setting than individual sessions provide.

Both group and individual counseling tend to be equally valuable in the following areas:

1. Being accepted as a worthwhile individual.
2. Being responsible for one's own behavior.
3. Deepening the understanding one has of human behavior.
4. Being able to explore wider variations in one's emotional life, and gaining greater confidence in the control of one's emotions.
5. Increasing one's self-confidence and trust in one's own perceptions.
6. Gaining strength to be an individual in one's own right.
7. Examining one's interests and values and moving toward integrating them into a life plan.

to help members increase their acceptance and understanding of self and others;

to help members deal with an identified and specified problem area they have in common;

to help members develop self-confidence and self-responsibility in directing their own lives;

to help members deal with concerns and problems related to the educational and vocational decision-making process;

to help members examine feelings, attitudes, values, and ideas about themselves and their world; and

to help members learn new and desirable adaptive behaviors (Dustin & George, 1973).

Certainly many more general goals could be identified, but these are sufficient as examples. Individual goal definition comes later in the process, when group members actually begin to interact together in the group. Once these general goals are defined, the counselor must orient all concerned people about the nature of specific and general goals and the group process in order to enlist group members' support and cooperation.

ORIENTING SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The principal purposes of orienting significant others are to help them understand the nature and intent of the group process, clarify misconceptions, answer questions, and generally obtain their support. Orientation should certainly include all parties who were contacted during the needs-assessment period of the organizational plan. They deserve to know what use you have made of the information they shared and in most cases are extremely interested in the suggestions you have developed. However, orientation regarding the group process, its nature, and its goals should encompass the vast majority of staff members, referral sources and if applicable the families of those selected for participation.

Counselors have a variety of options available to orient staff members in a school situation. They can organize in-service programs, make presentations at staff meetings, or contact members individually or in small groups (at department meetings). Methods should involve presentation, explanation, and preferably demonstration with a follow-up period allowed for questions. Important topics for orientation might include "distinctions between types of groups" (Chapter 8), "advantages of the group process" (Chapter 2), "rationale for group counseling" (Chapter 3), "nature of the group process" (Chapter 4 and 5) and "role of the leader" (Chapter 6). Demonstration is a particularly useful mechanism because staff members have an opportunity to observe the group process firsthand. Demonstration can involve the use of an actual group; if one is available or can be arranged. This type of procedure may be quite threatening because the counselor is automatically subjected to evaluation by colleagues. Also, if the group is from the same school as the staff being oriented, members may feel a great deal of anxiety because they are under the scrutiny of past, present, or future teachers. One way around this is to use a videotape that has been properly edited. In any case, the consent of participants must be obtained before proceeding. (If the group members are minors, the written permission of their parents is obligatory.) Another option is to use staff members to role-play a typical counseling session. Staff members thus can experience directly the dynamics involved. Finally, a mini-demonstration involving the use of a specific group exercise also may suffice.

Whatever approach to orientation is chosen, specific things need to be communicated. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) enumerate them.

> 1. Teachers should be aware of the nature of groups—of how and why students are selected and what their goals are.
> 2. Faculty members should be aware of the necessity of confidentiality.
> 3. Teachers should understand that the primary purpose of the group is not to promote a systematic attack on the school, the staff, or society at large.
> 4. The organizational and mechanical steps of group organization should be explained to the faculty.
> 5. The counselor should make his/her point of view known to the staff, especially in terms of group composition.
> 6. The faculty should know that wherever possible the counselor will report back to them on the group's progress. (pp. 141-142)

Generally speaking the same ideas apply to orienting families with the one difference being that they may be more wary and concerned than staff members. Parents can be invited to the school for presentations, met with individually, or talked with over the phone. Sometimes information sent home in the mail is sufficient. But when group members are minors, precautions always should be taken to obtain written, informed consent from parents.

ORIENTING POTENTIAL CLIENTELE

The purposes of orienting potential clients are to help them understand the nature and goals of group counseling, to answer questions, and to ignite an interest in participation. The most effective way of reaching students is to give presentations in classes that all students must attend. For example, in the high school the counselor can make a presentation in each grade level's English classes. In this way two purposes are served: (1) students are familiarized with the group process and its probable benefit to them; and (2) students increase their general knowledge of the counselor role and function. This type of systematic approach ensures consistency in presenting group information because counselors can prepare mimeographed, photocopied, and audio-visual materials to complement a presentation. Typical topics that could be covered in these presentations are "nature and process of group counseling" (Chapters 2, 4, and 5), "role of the group leader" (Chapter 6), and "role of the group member" (Chapter 7). Questions also should be dealt with as they arise. A key part of these sessions should be a mini-demonstration, in which class members participate in a brief but effective small-group activity. Many of the activities listed at the end of most chapters of this book lend themselves well to this type of demonstration. In this way students not only are given a cognitive introduction to the group process but an experiential one as well. Another element of a class presentation should be a sign-up sheet that members can fill out to indicate their interest in participating in a counseling group. A similar sheet also should be available in the counselor's office for those students who decide to volunteer at a later date. Nelson (1971) warned that volunteers should not be obtained by a show of hands because of the possible reactions to popular or unpopular students' actions in responding.

The counselor can use regular guidance and counseling contacts to spread the word about group counseling, but, as has already been stressed, this alone is insufficient. Effective orientation of staff, administration, and parents yields positive results because they inform potential clients of the group possibility and may even refer them. Another vehicle is to use the announcement approach, where concise clearly worded blurbs are passed out in classes, posted on bulletin boards, or run in the school newspaper stating that a certain type of group is being organized and that interested students should check with the counselor. Although this smacks a bit of the advertising syndrome, catchy phrases and creative designs and art forms will attract attention and produce results. One counselor got together with the art department and produced some very effective posters that attracted a substantial number of inquiries and an eventual commitment to group counseling by one-half of those who inquired.

Regardless of the approach used to orient potential clients, some essential items should be included. Muro and Freeman (1968) described them as follows:

> 1. Students should be told in simple terms about the nature of group counseling. It may be helpful to inform prospective counselees that participants will be given an opportunity to learn more about themselves, their plans, and the ways other students see them.
>
> 2. Prospective group members should know that group meetings are confidential and the topics discussed in groups are not for general discussion outside the group meetings.
>
> 3. Students should be informed that they are not joining a "therapy" group. Students frequently associate any type of counseling activity with those who are in some way "unhealthy."
>
> 4. The counselor should prepare a schedule of the times he has available for working with groups. Within this limitation, the number of meetings a week and the duration of counseling should be a topic to be decided after the groups have been formed.
>
> 5. Students should know whether or not volunteering to participate would mean they would be selected as group members. It is best to inform class size groups of the number of students the counselor wishes to have in a group and how the final selection will be made if the number of volunteers is too large.
>
> 6. It is beneficial to inform the class size groups that students who wish to participate may be interviewed individually. This will give the counselor an additional opportunity to make decisions about placing the student in a group. In addition, students may wish to ask the counselor personal questions about group participation that may be embarrassing to ask in a class size group. [pp. 314-315]

If the counselor has adequately performed the needs-assessment and orientation steps. Then the time is appropriate to proceed to the actual organization of specific groups. Note that although my primary emphasis is on group counseling, other types of groups described in Chapter 8 also may be called for at this point. If so the counselor must make the proper administrative arrangements and proceed in the manner prescribed by the nature of the group. For group counseling, however, further organizational steps are usually required before the groups actually convene.

SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF GROUP MEMBERS

Selection and preparation of group members go hand in hand in the minds of most writers and practitioners (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1979; Gazda, 1984; Mahler, 1969; Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988) because they are both associated with a pregroup individual interview with prospective group members. Once clients have indicated an interest in participating in group counseling, a good idea is to schedule them for an interview on an individual basis. The important areas of emphasis during this interview should be (1) client expectations, (2) counselor assessment, and (3) client commitment.

Client Expectations

Purposes of the interview from the client's perspective are to ask questions and develop realistic expectations about the group process. Ohlsen (1970) stated that "clients profit most from a counseling group when they understand what is expected of them before they decide whether to join" (p. 82). They should be informed that responsibility to change and help others change is part of their commitment and that they will be expected to work toward the "mutually aligned goal of personal-social growth" (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, p. 38). Clients should be given an opportunity to describe problems with which they hope the group can help them. They should be told that the group will engage in free and honest expressions of feeling and that members will have the opportunity to discuss their own and others' problems constructively. If group leaders are interested in eliciting change in group members, clients must be truly ready for constructive group participation.

Counselor Assessment

From the counselor perspective purposes of the screening interview are to evaluate the client's readiness for group counseling, develop that readiness if it's not present, gather information that will facilitate selection and placement, and generally get to know the client. The counselor's role is not to counsel the client at this point but rather to clarify the nature of the group process and to obtain data that will facilitate decisions in regard to the client's group participation. The counselor's professional judgment is involved here. The impact of each client on other individuals as well as on the total group must be considered. Counselors must keep in mind various factors discussed later in this chapter to facilitate placement of selected members in the most beneficial groups. Generally the counselor must try to determine how each client will best fit into group counseling and organize various groups around that knowledge.

Client Commitment

Nelson (1971) indicated that three steps exist in securing commitment from potential group counseling members. The first is the indication of interest in participating. The second is the individual interview. And the third is arrival at the group session. Of the three he felt that the individual interview may be the most vital. Ohlsen (1970) emphasized the importance of commitment, stating that "those who profit most from group counseling recognize and accept the need for assistance and are committed to talk about their problems, to solve them, and to change their behavior when they are accepted for group counseling" (p. 80). The screening interview should facilitate the securing of this type of commitment.

A pre-group, group meeting is another commonly used screening device. Potential group members are brought together as a group to orient them to the purpose and process, assess their readiness for group counseling and elicit their commitment. The advantage of this procedure is that the group leader gets a first-hand opportunity to assess the interpersonal competence of each member with respect to their ability to function effectively in a group.

Sometimes individual or pre-group group interviews are not convenient or time does not permit them. In that event a wise procedure may be to use the initial group session for group screening, during which the same objectives and information just discussed are considered. In fact,some group leaders prefer not to have pregroup interviews to avoid preconceived attitudes that have a tendency to form as a result of them. These counselors prefer to handle problems of readiness and commitment as they emerge in the group and to use the group as an arena and resource for dealing with them. In most cases, however, the counselor will be wise to make some type of pregroup contact, if only to waylay some of the gross destructive factors and misconceptions that will undoubtedly hamper group progress.

GROUP-COMPOSITION FACTORS

In some respects the group counselor is like a baker who must put together all the right ingredients in proper proportion in order to come up with a satisfactory product. There are certain factors that must be weighed in the organization of any group. Too much of one thing or too little of another can cause problems. No magic formula exists for putting together all the right ingredients in their proper amounts. Research has not clearly delineated any specific guidelines either. But practical experience, combined with investigative efforts of researchers, has revealed some tendencies the counselor as a professional and as an artist can use to organize groups that are catalytic to therapeutic change (Roark & Roark, 1979).

Homogeneity versus Heterogeneity

The issue of homogeneous and heterogenous groups was already posed in Chapter 8 in discussing "common-problems" groups and "case-centered" groups. Both types have advantages and disadvantages, but the counselor who is working with a normal range of clients doesn't have to take a stand at any one particular place on this issue. A more appropriate procedure is to maintain a flexible attitude, making decisions based on the nature of the problems and clients being worked with. Commonality certainly enhances identification and facilitates the cohesive development of the group. But too much of one thing also can spoil the process and lead to stagnation and disinterest. Bach (1954) noted that heterogeneity gives members the experience of learning to relate to different kinds of people, but Mahler (1969) warned that too wide a variation may create problems in communication and relationship formation. Nelson (1971) and Dustin and George (1973) took a more middle-of-the-road perspective and advocated that groups should include some members who have different concerns. All things considered, balance seems to be the key. Groups should have enough diversity to generate interest but also enough commonality to make members feel comfortable and identify with one another. Certain groups that deal with specific concerns like disruptive behavior may tend toward homogeneity, whereas other groups that deal with a broader category of concerns like social competency may be more heterogeneous in nature. Counselors must find their own solutions to this issue, taking into consideration the type of experience that will be most beneficial to the group members and the group's purposes and that will accommodate the counselor's personality and leadership style.

Age and Maturity

For most counseling groups, generally, an advisable procedure is to put members together who are roughly the same age. For noneducational, adult groups this is less important but still a factor. Most practitioners agree that maturity more than age is the key, but leaders hesitate to group on this basis because the specifications of maturity levels have not been clearly delineated. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) felt that for organizing groups of children more attention should be given to developmental factors than to chronological ones. Ohlsen (1970) made a far more comprehensive assertion that social maturity is simply more important than age. Until clearer guidelines are established by research, the counselor is warranted in using age guidelines in the placement of group members but should temper them by restructuring groups that have obvious inequities in social maturity. Members tend to be more comfortable in their own age groups because of the importance of peer relationships. Any variation of this type of grouping should be done with specific purposes in mind (for example, putting teenagers and parents together to increase communication) or to effect certain special treatment procedures in the group (for instance, using socially competent seniors as models for sophomores who lack certain social skills.

Sex

The literature contains general consensus that same-sex groups are preferable for preadolescents and mixed-sex groups are more appropriate for adolescent and adult groups. Ginott (1968) felt that mixed-sex groups are appropriate for preschool children since no compelling reasons exist to separate them. But for school-age children he firmly adheres to same-sex groups because boys and girls are in the process of seeking masculine and feminine identity. The mixed-sex group has merit because it is a more natural environment with immediate relevance to the outside world and is a safe but effective way for males and females to deal with their problems and further their normal social-emotional development (Ohlsen, 1970).

Mahler (1969) basically supported the ideas expressed here but did note particular situations that call for one or the other of the sex groupings. Groups organized to work with discipline-problem clients are more effective if they include only same-sex members, whereas, social-problems groups should definitely be mixed. He also pointed out that when counselors are in doubt regarding the sex grouping of clients they should consult the clients. In most cases especially from adolescence on up the inclusion of both sexes stimulates interest even though it may also be a bit threatening to members. The relational developments that result from group interaction between the sexes are valuable regardless of the specific goal for which the group was formed.

Other Factors

Additional factors to consider in the selection and placement of group members are verbal ability, similarities in background and personality, and prior acquaintance and friendship. Verbal ability, especially its potential, must be assessed so that extreme differences do not interfere with the communication process in the group. If ability is comparable the more expressive members can model verbal behaviors for less expressive members; drawing out a quiet person can be an appropriate goal for a group. But if members who lack verbal abilities and skills are placed with those who verbalize with ease, it can be a very frustrating experience. In fact, if members with low verbal ability are put on the spot by the leader or other members, they can suffer extreme embarrassment, leading to withdrawal or aggression and causing untold damage to their self-concepts. The best procedure is to work with these members in groups of their own and occasionally admit carefully selected models until they have upgraded their skills and self-confidence.

To consider similarities of background and personality in depth would require a tremendous amount of the counselor's time and attention if used as the basic criterion for selection and placement. Understanding the nuances of various cultural, environmental, family, racial, and personality factors and their impact on group interaction is a nearly impossible task. It is also a topic far beyond the scope and intent of this book. But benefit will come from giving at least passing attention to these factors prior to the commencement of the group in an effort to spot factors that might cause obvious concern in the group. Differences, especially those related to culture, ethnicity, and race, should not be a reason for excluding members but should be noted as possible factors that would be beneficial to group members. Since understanding self and others is an important goal for any group, background and personality differences definitely contribute to the broadening of that understanding. In individual cases, however, decisions may have to be made to omit a person from group participation based on characteristics that preclude effective adjustment and involvement in the group.

Prior acquaintance and friendship can be touchy subjects in member selection. In some instances including friends in the same group has adverse results because they tend to support one another in a cliquish manner, which deters the group process. Including friends in the same group also may have detrimental effects on their friendship. On the other hand, the group can benefit from members whose friendships is the support needed to help them reveal and work on their problems. The group also can improve friendships by helping members learn behaviors that are conducive to deeper understanding and better communication. The best way to decide on this factor is to obtain additional information on the individuals and their friendship. Observe them in other settings, talk to them, and try to determine the essential character of their relationship. In some respect to expect that groups be composed of persons who do not know each other is unrealistic because in many situations groups are composed of persons who relate to each other for some reason and therefore do not qualify as being strangers. The group counselor need only be concerned with relationships that may interfere with the group process, and in most circumstances even these can be worked with in the group.

The counselor's main concern regarding these factors is to develop a reasonable balance in the group's composition to facilitate the helping process rather than detract from it. If members are included who function reasonably well in small-group situations and if extreme variations are avoided, the resulting effect will most likely be positive.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the various selection and placement factors the group counselor also must be concerned about several technical factors that can enhance the group's effectiveness. Decisions and strategies in these areas affect the nature of the group. These factors also affect the group's initial reaction to the leader, influencing effectiveness and establishing the boundaries within which he or she will operate. The major technical factors of group organization are discussed in the following subtopics.

Voluntary versus Forced Participation

Counselors must make a basic decision about the kind of group member they wish to work with in each group that is organized. The three basic types are the volunteer, the forced volunteer, and the forced participant. ***Volunteers*** decide to participate of their own volition or on the basis of group-counseling information they have received from presentations, from friends who have participated, or from other sources. The volunteer is most likely to benefit from group counseling. Johnson (1963) indicated that clients who are experiencing pain and seek help on their own are easier to work with than those who have been coerced by family or friends. Ohlsen (1970) also affirmed that the volunteer is more apt to profit than the nonvolunteer, and Mahler (1969) maintained that for this reason the decision to participate should be left up to the individual. The counselor who works with volunteers is much more likely to experience success. Volunteering is also an effective means of ensuring commitment since these members take responsibility for thrusting themselves into the interaction of the group. Thus the success of the group process is more assured with volunteers, but the extent of its impact in terms of numbers is limited. Many clients who could benefit from the group process will not freely volunteer, and if counselors restrict themselves to volunteers they will be limiting their effectiveness.

Forced volunteers are like "Mr. In Between." They have professed their interest in participating but only because they were cajoled, bugged, or directed to do so. They enter the group under the guise of their volunteering but experience great ambivalence because of the pressure that was used to make them decide to participate. Forced volunteers may present a problem in the group because they are hiding behind the facade of willing participation. Thus they must resolve their dissonance in regard to being in the group besides trying to resolve their problems. With forced volunteers more time must be spent in the initial stages laying a groundwork of trust and acceptance. If handled carefully these members can convince themselves that the decision was in their own best interests no matter what its genesis was, and then they will commit themselves totally to the process. But if forced too fast and too hard they may regret the decision and negate all efforts of the group to help them.

Mahler (1969) advocated required participation for certain people (for example, acting-out boys). He felt that involuntary attendance should be required whenever "group counseling is being used to help people who are causing trouble or having difficulty adjusting to a situation in which they find themselves" (p. 60). The counselor must decide whether the effort of working with ***forced participants*** will result in positive change or have diminishing returns. Realizing that the returns may be less than hoped for and tend to be in contrast to volunteer groups, the counselor may still be able to work effectively with groups composed of forced participants. Gazda (1968) summarized the whole issue of voluntariness as "An individual must either have or be capable of developing a desire to change at the time he enters a group. Involuntary clients can be assisted, however, if they remain in counseling long enough to experience the beneficial effects of the process" [pp. 268-269].

Basically the decision about which kind of group members counselors will work with is between two main types: (1) members who volunteer and (2) members the counselor feels the group process can help. On the basis of these two criteria counselors can organize all their groups. The only precautions are that selectivity is still important among volunteers and that the counselor must be willing to admit that group counseling cannot help everyone.

Open versus Closed Groups

Another decision the counselor must make is whether the group will be open or closed. In open groups old members leave and new members rotate in as the group per se continues. In closed groups the same members stay together from the beginning to the end. Both types have advantages, but for counseling groups in schools the tendency should be toward closed groups. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) gave one good reason for this: "A group must develop, it must move through or pass through certain phases for optimal effectiveness. Such movement requires time and a sense of cohesiveness" [p. 148].

The introduction of new members can impede this process of development because it automatically places members at different levels. If the decision is made to open a group to a new member, the leader should discuss it first with the group and make the integration of the new member the responsibility of the group. The introduction of a new member should be done on a "one at a time" basis so that the group can more easily absorb the new person without experiencing a great deal of pressure and causing severe regression in the group's development. Certainly adding a new member will cause some growing pains, but if it's done on an individual basis and if a good therapeutic rapport exists among members, the impact will be slight. In fact, the new member's development will probably be accelerated, and initiating a new member can be a positive experience for the group, as well.

In contrast, in agency/practice settings, open-ended groups are more practical due to the ebb and flow of caseloads and client turnover. More than one member may be added at a time but two or three should be the maximum as three already represents a significant minority with subgrouping propensities that could undermine the group process. Additionally, in inpatient settings where groups meet daily, open ended groups are more typical.

In most cases, however, staying with a set group membership is preferable because it facilitates the feeling of togetherness, which enhances identification and cohesiveness and helps the group move in a more consistent developmental manner to its culmination point. Within a closed group the possibility is higher that all the "business" of the group will be finished—"new," "unfinished," or "old"—while in an open group new members always introduce "new business" and their entrance into the group may effect changes that prevent "old business" from being fully completed. (Frederick S. Perls, gestalt psychologist and well-known group therapist, used the terms "new business," "unfinished business," and "old business" in reference to the material considered in group therapy and encounter group sessions.)

Group Size

No magic number determines the absolute effectiveness of the group-counseling process, but reasonable considerations necessitate limiting group size. Roark and Roark (1979) recommend a size range of five to twelve members. For practical and therapeutic reasons, however, counseling groups should be limited to ten or fewer members. Mahler (1969) stated:

> The main dangers of groups with more than ten members are that some members may not get adequate attention or be able to participate fully, that others can avoid involvement, that the counselor may have difficulty giving adequate attention to each member, and that the group may tend to become more of a class than a counseling session. [p.55]

For adolescents and adults, groups of six to ten can be handled effectively by a leader. That size of a group is large enough to maintain interest due to the diversity in the group, gives members an adequate opportunity to participate, and yet is large enough for members to feel safety in numbers. For children, groups of four to six are more appropriate. Mayer and Baker (1967) indicated that the size of groups for children should vary with the age and maturity level of the counselees. Although some group experts stress a specific number, generally the group leader must decide what a workable group size is. This decision should be based on the counselor's own effectiveness and comfort in various sized groups and on knowledge of group members. In most cases the ten-member limit should be adhered to, and therefore the decision applies mainly to establishing what the minimum size will be.

Time and Frequency of Meetings

Roark and Roark (1979) delineated time into ***calendar time*** and ***clock time.*** Calendar time refers to the schedule of group meetings and clock time refers to the length of individual sessions. The optimal frequency of sessions and length of individual meetings have not been definitely established. Both tend to conform to the administrative structure within which the group is formed. In schools individual sessions mirror the length of class periods, and frequency tends to be established on the basis of student and counselor availability. Mahler (1969) stated that groups should meet at least once a week for a minimum of ten sessions, although urgency may require more frequent meetings. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) suggested twice-weekly meetings, reducing or increasing frequency with the development of the group. Based on a review of research, Roark and Roark (1979) recommend that closed groups meet twice weekly over a ten week span. The more often the group meets the greater the tendency to be cohesive; however, members should have time between group sessions to reconsider group interaction, prepare themselves for the next session, and simply relax and unwind.

As far as length of each session is concerned the class-period approach is practical for schools but isn't ideal for the group process. Class periods tend to be too short because groups do need time to warm up and take the first 10 to 20 minutes to settle down to the work of the group. This time is important and should not be eliminated, although members can be made aware of it and can work to reduce the amount of time needed for warm-up. Work time in the group gets limited to only 20 to 40 minutes depending on the length of the class period.

The preferable time period for group counseling is one and one-half to two hours. With more flexible scheduling procedures in some schools the possibility increases to set this amount of time aside for group counseling without raising havoc with the student's schedule. However, the class period is still the primary unit at this point, so the leader should see that groups begin and end promptly. This facilitates maximum use of time and good public relations with other staff members since students don't show up late for their classes. For children shorter time periods are appropriate, ranging from 20 minutes to an hour depending on the attention span of members and the practical learning and administrative requirements of members' classroom environment.

In agency/practice settings scheduling relative to clock time is not a problem. However, "when" in the day group sessions are scheduled is crucial. Prime group time is one and one-half to two hours in the late afternoon or evening which is the most convenient time slot for children, adolescents, and adults who must coordinate school, work, and family schedules.

The number of sessions again depends on the goals of the group and the nature of the members. Quarters, semesters, and school years do provide some natural time periods for groups to meet, but they should not be rigidly subscribed to. Interestingly enough, however, even in agency/practice settings clients tend to think and behave on the basis of school year time frames. At least eight sessions are necessary for groups to develop any semblance of a therapeutic group process, and more are preferable. Members need to be informed of the termination date of sessions so they can pace their work accordingly and do not get left in midstream. Even when groups continue on an open-ended basis, the advisable procedure is to give members a couple of weeks notice before disbanding.

Scheduling

In school situations, scheduling is consistently one of the group counselor's biggest headaches, especially if group counseling does not enjoy the support and cooperation of administration and staff. For this reason the counselor must do a good job of orienting significant others and developing a positive working relationship with teachers as a preventative measure. Whenever possible group meetings should be scheduled during students' free periods or in conjunction with a relevant curriculum offering, such as a "knowing me" class. A second strategy is to rotate meeting times so that students don't miss the same classes all the time. Mahler (1969) suggested an additional strategy for groups organized to help troublemakers. He suggested that groups should meet during the period when the trouble normally occurs. In any event, arranging schedules should take into account both the member's and the counselor"s obligations and responsibilities and should show a concern for the perspective of significant others. Clearly relate the schedule to members, stressing the necessity of staying with the schedule but allowing enough flexibility to make justified exceptions.

In agency/practice settings clients' schedules rather than agency or practitioner schedules create the scheduling obstacles. Most of the resistance relative to engaging in and committing to the group is worked through by addressing the scheduling issue.

Physical Arrangements

To say that "the room makes the group," would be a gross exaggeration but it does help. The physical setting is a significant factor and especially influences the nature of group interaction during the early stages when the development of rapport and establishing member comfort are important. Mahler (1969) stated that the group room should be small but large enough to accommodate everyone without crowding. It should have sufficient privacy so that the group neither distracts others nor is distracted by them. Nothing is more disruptive than to have to compete with noises outside the group and nothing is more embarrassing than having an outsider, especially someone members know, enter the room in the middle of a personal discussion. Muro and Freeman (1968) recommended that the same room should be used for each meeting since roaming seems to hinder group progress. The decision to meet around a table or without one, to use chairs or sit on the floor (with pillows, cushions, or bean bags) is up to the leader and the group. Having a suitable facility is a big help in this regard.

Roark and Roark (1979) extended physical arrangements to include the way in which the room is set up and people are seated advocating a circle format as most conducive to effective group interaction. The decor of the room can contribute to members' comfort, but the leader always must be on the lookout for group members using the setting as an excuse not to become involved. No matter how poor the facility is, my experience has been that the group interaction can overcome any physical setting barrier if members concentrate on each other and those purposes for which they are meeting.

SUMMARY

The basic steps in establishing a group program are as follows: (1) Determine the needs of the clients, utilizing as broad a range of resources as possible. (2) On the basis of the needs assessment determine the relevance of group counseling and establish general goals for which groups are to be organized. (3) Orient significant others in order to help them understand the group process, and enlist their support and cooperation in organizing the group program. (4) Orient potential clientele to clarify the nature of the group process and its benefits to them and solicit their interest in participating. (5) Select and prepare group members, preferably on the basis of a screening interview in which questions are answered, expectations are developed, and commitment is obtained. (6) Develop specific groups, taking into account the group-composition factors that will result in the most tenable helping relationships, and organize them in accord with the specific technical qualities that facilitate positive interaction. (7) Hold the first group meeting.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

See pages 412 and 413 for learning activities.

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Chapter 10

EVALUATING GROUP COUNSELING

In writing this chapter, I had to make a basic decision whether to direct it toward the group researcher or the group practitioner. Although these two roles are by no means mutually exclusive in theory, they are often separated in reality. A number of group-counseling textbooks (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1979; Gazda, 1984; Mahler, 1969; Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988) are oriented toward the researcher. As a result, though well-written and worthwhile from a research perspective, they do not fully address the needs of the in-the-field counselor who wishes to determine whether group counseling is effective or not. Since the basic purpose of this text is to present a practical consideration of the group process, I chose to direct the focus of this section to the practitioner. This decision by no means reflects a negative attitude toward research. Rather it reflects my current clinical involvement and orientation which has moved me away from research as a primary facet of my group work endeavors (Trotzer, 1971; Trotzer & Kassera, 1972; Trotzer & Sease, 1971). A definite need still exists for carefully designed and conducted projects that will clarify many of the clouded issues that still haunt group counseling and psychotherapy. Lakin (1979) has affirmed this need as follows:

> No coherent theory of small group process has yet been developed. Concepts of the researchers as well as those of practitioners remain slippery and imprecise. The key problems remain: those of identifying the really central processes and of specifying how groups influence participants as well as how participants influence them.(p. 426)

Only extensive and effective research can resolve these problems.

If you are interested in pursuing the research perspective, I recommend several sources as starting points. For an initial consideration of the problems and requirements of group-counseling research begin with Cohn's (1967) *Guidelines for Future Research on Group Counseling in the Public School Setting*, and follow that up with Mahler's (1969) discussion of research problems. Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe (1988) and Dinkmeyer and Muro (1979) pay particular attention to research design and literature evaluation. For relatively comprehensive reviews of early studies, read Wright (1963), Gazda and Larsen (1968), and Anderson (1969). Zimpfer's (1984) *Group Work in the Helping Professions: A Bibliography* is a basic resource for beginning a research project. These sources provide a solid foundation for beginning a research project in group counseling.

RESEARCH OR EVALUATION: THE PRACTITIONER'S DILEMMA

Conscientious group counselors are usually confronted with a conflict between an obligation to do all they can to expand and clarify the knowledge and understanding of group counseling and a role responsibility to extend and apply group counseling to the greatest number of clientele as is meaningfully possible. The former attempts to involve counselors as responsible contributors to the broad professional community of group counselors, and the latter relates specifically to the role function of counselors in the particular settings in which they work. The research perspective is emphasized by many of the counselor's trainers, because of the research orientation of higher education, and by the professional literature and professional associations. The role perspective is nurtured by the work setting, where there interest is in the counselor's impact rather than in his or her reputation in professional circles. Fulfilling the expectations of both the profession and the job requires at least a superhuman effort, and in most cases is realistically impossible. This situation causes pressures and frustrations that can curtail the effectiveness and personal satisfaction of the group counselor.

Common reactions to this dilemma reflect extremes in commitment as well as compromise. At one extreme, are those counselors who look at the complexity and demands of group counseling, the need for accountable action, and the requirements of a research orientation and decide (actively or by default) to do nothing. Therefore they neither initiate a group program nor do they become embroiled in a situation they feel would only add difficulty and pressure to their already strenuous role. At the other extreme are those counselors who completely buy into the research orientation and expend all their energies designing and implementing projects to further the cause of science with respect to group counseling. Because of the consuming nature of a research perspective, these counselors often end up neglecting or failing to do justice to their other important role responsibilities. Their clientele therefore do not receive adequate overall professional attention and are sacrificed for the sake of research. Finally, compromisers try to appease both the research requirements and the demands of the setting by doing research of convenience and expedience. In most cases their efforts yield minimal results, because the methodology is poor.

The obvious conclusion is that none of these approaches alone provides a viable answer for the group counselor. Clients suffer or much effort is exerted in meaningless endeavors which tend to harm the group process more than help it. Counselors who wish to use groups must therefore develop a more practical and realistic perspective if they are to effectively resolve the research dilemma. They can do this by carefully appraising the demands of (1) their environment, (2) a group-counseling program, (3) meaningful research, and (4) the counselor role, and then making a constructive decision based on the reality of those demands.

A REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

An assessment of the four areas just mentioned points out the following: (1) Within every counselor's work environment are clientele whose needs can be most adequately met through the development of a group program. The group process should therefore be incorporated into the guidance, counseling therapy, and consulting functions of the counselor in an effort to facilitate individual adjustment, improve the learning environment, and generally enhance the mental health of clients they serve. (2) A successful group program requires careful planning and preparation and entails a substantial time commitment to make it beneficial. Therefore counselors must place groups high on their priority list of activities if they are to give groups the amount of attention they need and deserve. (3) Potentially significant research requires more money than is usually available (Mahler, 1969), close involvement with specialists from professionally allied fields, such as psychometrists and statisticians (Cohn, 1967), and a great deal of time and effort. In most cases substantial, well-designed, sophisticated, and carefully conducted studies are necessary to answer the key questions that group counseling poses. The typical group counselor does not have the time, opportunity, expertise, and/or interest to initiate this kind of effort. (4) The counselor's role, for all the attention it has received, still remains somewhat nebulous and at best is less than ideal in practice (Trotzer & Kassera, 1972). The inclusion of a concentrated group research orientation, therefore, may serve to confuse the issue further. It might also alienate potential clients. As a result group counselors can best carry out their responsibilities by cultivating certain perspectives.

Leave the Major Burden of Research to the Researchers

Since most studies are generated by graduate students and other professionals whose job descriptions primarily entail research, the practitioner need not assume further responsibilities in this area. Ohlsen (1970) stated, "Considering [their] commitment to service, the time required to obtain adequate financial support for research, the difficulties involved in appraising outcomes of counseling and [their] own feelings about [their] research skills, one would not expect the practitioner to do much research" [pp. 284-285]. A suitable role for the practitioner is to become a collaborator with group researchers (Dies, 1985) participating in well designed and carefully conceived research projects and offering their groups to researchers for studies and data collection.

Become a Consumer of Research

The procedures and findings of research projects reported in various professional journals and at professional meetings and conventions are an invaluable source of help to the group counselor. As a consumer, the group counselor can integrate this information into practice to make the group process even more effective. Dinkmeyer and Muro (1971) confirmed this point of view stating that the "practicing counselor is more a research consumer than he is a producer" (p. 303).

Being a consumer is made convenient by professional journals such as the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work* which contains a research section in each issue (followed by a section of articles on "Working With Groups"). In addition, *JSGW's* David Zimpfer often does critical reviews of group research on selected topics in his "Reviews and Developments" column. Zimpfer's (1984) *Bibliography* is also an excellent resource to the serious consumer.

Concentrate on Developing Experience and Expertise as a Group Leader

One of the major weaknesses of many group-counseling research projects is that they do not utilize leaders who have extensive group-counseling experience and competence (Cohn, 1967; Mahler, 1969). Thus when they fail to attain significance, it may be a result of low-level leader expertise rather than lack of power in the group-counseling process. By building one's expertise in practice, the counselor will contribute to a more extensive population of competent group leaders who can be called upon for help in research projects (Dies, 1983).

Become an Evaluator of Group Counseling in Your Own Setting

Even though counselors may not be in the position to do research, that does not negate their responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of group counseling in their own environment. Cohn (1967) emphasized that the practitioner needs "to be persuaded that evaluation is necessary to determine actual outcomes rather than depending solely upon his [or her] own individual perception of outcomes" (p. 28). Counselors must be interested in assessing the results of their group program. They need to be accountable to their clients, themselves, and their profession, and an evaluation emphasis can meet that need.

RESEARCH VERSUS EVALUATION

The basic difference between ***evaluation*** and research is that evaluation is concerned with assessing what is happening or what has happened in order to determine the value and worth of the assessed occurrence, while ***research*** is designed to assess the nature and impact of a treatment for purposes of predicting and generalizing to other situations. Research also entails a formal design for comparison purposes and incorporates the use of descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Research makes use of accumulated knowledge and procedures, which compose a professional discipline in their own right. Evaluation is less formal and is not restricted by rigorous statistical and procedural limits. Its procedures are associated with the specific area being evaluated rather than with an outside body of professional knowledge. An analogy might be that evaluation is to the group counselor as teacher-made tests are to the classroom instructor. In both cases the practitioner utilizes information from formal testing or research methods but adapts it to fit particular subjects, methods, clientele, and environments. Evaluation uses discovered results as a means of revising or consolidating a very specific treatment (in this case group counseling in a particular school, agency, or other helping environment). Research is more oriented toward defining overall group-counseling characteristics in order to standardize the process as a formal and specified procedure of the counseling profession.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In presenting evaluation as the focus of this chapter and as a realistic approach for counselors to use in appraising the effect of group counseling, the following basic assumptions are made:

1. Professional counselors are primarily interested in the impact group counseling has in their own settings and that global answers to group questions are of secondary importance.

2. The typical counselor in most settings does not have the wherewithal in terms of time, interest, skill, and access to financial resources and multidisciplinary professional expertise needed to conduct significant group-counseling research.

3. Group counseling is an effective procedure in helping clients resolve their problems but evaluation is necessary to denote its specific impact.

4. Effective evaluation practices in individual settings will create fertile ground and a solid data base for formalized, extensive, and specific research projects in group counseling.

5. Effective evaluation procedures will in and of themselves contribute significantly to the expanding experiential base necessary for conducting successful group counseling.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

The group counselor must develop evaluation procedures that are relevant to counseling via the group process. Just as classroom teachers develop evaluative practices in accord with subject matter and teaching methods and businesses develop marketing analysis procedures commensurate with their product, so counselors must construct evaluation procedures appropriate to their area of expertise. In doing this the counselor can learn much from experiences and findings of researchers since many of the factors which undermine research also undermine evaluation. By eliminating or at least decreasing error factors and paying particular attention to specificity, effective evaluation can be implemented. The following discussion describes various procedures to help the counselor assess both the process and the outcomes of group counseling.

Process Evaluation

Process refers to what goes on in the group and has three basic components: the leader, the members, and the group interaction. Efforts to evaluate group process are for the purpose of increasing understanding of group dynamics and to help counselors improve effectiveness in utilizing the group as a helping vehicle. Evaluation of process is generally associated with observation, analysis, and feedback. Specific goals include (1) determining leader methods, attitudes, and characteristics to assess the effectiveness of approach; (2) determining member attitudes, reactions, and characteristics to better understand the effect of the group on the individual; and (3) identifying the focus and themes of group interaction to establish their relevance to the goals of the group and its members. Various methods discussed in the following paragraphs lend themselves well to process evaluation.

Expert Evaluation. One method is to ask colleagues or other professionals who have expertise in group counseling to observe your group sessions and give you feedback on their observations. This can be done either on a consistent basis resembling a supervision relationship or on a selective basis where the expert is asked to observe when the group is at an impasse or not going too well. The leader then uses the observer as a resource in finding ways of improving the group interaction. If colleagues are used, follow the procedures detailed in Chapter 6. To avoid group participants being distracted by the observer, have the observer watch the group by an indirect means such as a one-way mirror or by closed-circuit T.V. Some counselors have found that observation by a group of experts followed by a round-table discussion with the leader is professionally growth producing.

Member Evaluation. Another source of process evaluation data is the group participants themselves. Who is really better qualified to evaluate process than those who are affected by it? Some counselors use what might be called "3 x 5 evaluation" methods. This format involves giving members 3 x 5 cards at the end of each session and asking them to write down their honest impressions or appraisal of the session. They also may include suggestions for improvement. An alternative is to have cards or sheets printed with a number of descriptive continuums to which members can respond by circling the rating that best represents their reaction to the group (for example, a seven-point scale of boring to extremely interesting). The cards (filled out anonymously) are collected by the leader and used to help assess the group's development in an ongoing manner.

Some leaders ask members to keep journals or logs of their reactions to each group meeting, turning them in at the succeeding session. This procedure tends to give a more comprehensive picture of the group process but creates a disadvantage because the counselor is always a week behind. This can be rectified if members are willing to turn in their logs at a time prior to the next meeting. Then leaders can make use of the material, adjusting their approaches accordingly. Another option is to simply collect the journals at the end of the entire group process as a learning device for future reference.

Yalom (1985) suggested the use of leader process summaries dictated immediately after each session, typed and distributed to members between sessions as a means of evaluating group process, facilitating flow from session to session and extending the depth of group interaction. Group members can take on this task as a means of presenting their view of the group process.

Evaluation of Audio and Video Replays. The most extensive method of process evaluation uses either recorded or videotaped replays of group sessions. Certainly no better way exists of analyzing one's actions and the interaction of the group than to relive it and mechanically control the action to get a clearer understanding of the process. The major disadvantage of this approach is time. Busy counselors seldom have the opportunity to go over sessions without sacrificing some other aspect of their jobs or personal lives. For this reason tapes tend to be used extensively in training but seldom on the job. One means of circumventing the time problem is to listen to sessions or excerpts that the leader feels left something to be desired. A good idea is to get members used to being recorded so that it doesn't become a disruptive element. Some counselors make the mistake of introducing the tape recorder or videotape at crucial points in the process that they want to look at more closely. They bring the recorder to the session for the first time and then are surprised when the interaction is completely different. Whether you listen to the sessions or not, get the group accustomed to being taped so you can use the recordings if the need arises. These recorded sessions also can be used to stimulate professional discussion and obtain constructive feedback at staff meetings.

Interaction Evaluation. A more formal method of evaluating the group process is for counselors to familiarize themselves with a group interaction scale such as Bales' (1950) *Interaction Analysis Scale*, the *Hill Interaction Matrix* (Hill, 1966) or Simon and Agazarian's (1974) *Sequential Analysis of Verbal Interaction* (SAVI).

The scale can be used by counselors to analyze tape sessions on their own or train observers to use it. In either case they can use the scale to quantify interaction patterns and evaluate them qualitatively. The conscientious use of these sophisticated methods can yield valuable results for the counselor's own understanding of the group process and as a guide to productive group interaction (Zimpfer, 1986).

Group Themes. The group process can be assessed effectively on the basis of themes or topics the group considers. Bates (1966) and Muro and Denton (1968) have illustrated this evaluation procedure clearly with adolescent and college student populations. A theme is a "point of focus in the group's interaction with a clear beginning and stopping point" (Dinkmeyer & Muro, 1971, p.111). Identification of these themes gives the group leader a solid basis for determining whether the group is engaging in meaningful goal-oriented interaction or not. If not, the leader can exert influence to get the members to do so.

Process Evaluation Scales. Two process scales have been developed from material in this text. The *Leadership Process Evaluation Scale* (Figure 10.1) is constructed from information pertaining to leadership skills found in Chapter 6. The *Member Process Evaluation Scale* (Figure 10.2) is constructed from descriptions of members behaviors in Chapter 7.

(Continued on page 400)

Instructions: Observe the group leader, noting each response he or she makes. Identify that response as representative of one of the skill categories listed on the next page. Place an X in the Incidence (I) column each time you observe an identifiable skill. Then note the impact of that response by evaluating it as:

> *Appropriate* (helpful to the person or the group process):
>
> *Neutral* (no noticeable impact negatively or positively):
>
> *Inappropriate* (unhelpful to the person or adversely affecting the group process).

If the response is appropriate, place a 3 in the Evaluation (E) column behind the incidence mark; if neutral, place a 2; and if inappropriate, a 1. Be sure to identify each response and evaluate its impact. Frequencies of each skill can be calculated by tabulating the marks in the I column. Leader-effectiveness means can be determined for each skill as well as on an overall basis by averaging the ratings in the E column.

Figure 10.1. Leadership process evaluation scale

NOTE: Counselors who use this scale should attach an addendum describing each skill for reference purposes. This information can be obtained from Chapter 6.

Figure 10.1. Continued.

LEADERSHIP PROCESS EVALUATION SCALE

I = Incidence 3 = Appropriate

E = Evaluation 2 = Neutral

1 = Inappropriate

Session No. ______

Skills	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	Totals	
															Freq	Avg
Reaction Skills																
1. Restatement																
2. Reflection																
3. Clarification																
4. Summarization																
Interaction Skills																
5. Moderating																
6. Interpreting																
7. Linking																
8. Blocking																
9. Supporting																
10. Limiting																
11. Protecting																
12. Consensus Taking																
Action Skills																
13. Questioning																
14. Probing																
15. Tone Setting																
16. Confronting																
17. Personal Sharing																
18. Modeling																

Leader Effectiveness Mean ☐

Instructions: First number each group member with an ID number to facilitate the rating process. Observe the group interaction, identifying member behaviors according to the categories listed in the chart. Note the incidence of the behavior by placing a mark in the incidence column of the scale. Also indicate the person engaging in that behavior by placing his or her ID number in the Member ID column. Except for those exceptions noted on the scale, there must be a member ID number recorded for each incidence mark made. Total the incidence marks for each behavior to determine how frequently that behavior was exhibited in the group session. A behavior profile can be developed for each member by totaling the number of times each member's ID number appears in each behavior category.

Session No. ______ Number of Members in Group ________

Member Behaviors	Incidence	Total Frequency	Member ID
Resisting Behaviors			
1. Monopolizing			
2. Hostility			
3. Silence △			
4. Withdrawal			
5. Absence ○			
6. Intellectualizing			
7. Old Pro			
8. Joker			
9. Housekeeper			
10. Help Rejecting, Complaining			
11. Self-righteous moralizing			
12. Rescuing			
Manipulating Behaviors			
13. Socializing			
14. Scapegoating			
15. Dependency			
16. Submissiveness			
17. Aggression			
18. Criticism			
19. Domination			
20. Mothering			
21. Calculating			
Helping Behaviors			
22. Listening △			
23. Facilitating			
24. Leading			
25. Self-Disclosing			
26. Giving feedback			
27. Leveling			
28. Keeping Confidence △			
29. Personalizing Communication			
Emotional Behaviors			
30. Venting Negative Feelings			
31. Physical Aggression			
32. Acting Out			
33. Crying			
34. Affection			

△ Behaviors labled with this marking may be recorded as group behaviors as well as individual member behaviors requiring a member ID.

○ Absence need only be recorded once per session designating those members not present. However, both an incidence mark and an ID number are required.

Figure 10.2. Member process evaluation scale.

NOTE: Counselors who use this scale should attach an addendum describing the characteristics of each behavior for reference purposes. This information can be obtained from Chapter 7.

The *Leadership Process Evaluation Scale* is helpful in assessing the nature and effectiveness of the counselor as a group leader. Each leader response is observed and identified on the basis of the various skill categories. The impact of that response is then evaluated as appropriate, neutral, or inappropriate. By accumulating the frequencies of each skill, leaders can determine the characteristics of their leadership roles and functions and leadership styles. By calculating means based on the evaluation ratings leaders can determine their effectiveness in using each skill and on an overall basis. Group leaders can use this information to improve their skills and cultivate the use of skills they deem more helpful. They can clearly determine whether they are making appropriate progress in the use of their skills.

The *Member Process Evaluation Scale* is useful in helping the group leader evaluate the behavior of individual members. It also depicts characteristics of the group interaction at any one point that can easily be related to the process of group development. Members' behaviors are observed and identified according to the categories listed on the scale. Both the frequency of the behaviors and the persons engaging in them are important. Other than the exceptions noted on the scale each behavior recorded in the incidence column must have a corresponding number in the member ID column. Each member should be given an ID number to facilitate the evaluation process. In this way accumulation of the behavior frequencies describes the interaction in the group, and tabulation of each member's behaviors results in a profile of that person's participation. Information from this scale helps counselors understand the members and the group process better and gives them definite areas that need to be worked on in the group. It also indicates when the group atmosphere is becoming more therapeutic and less resistant and manipulative.

Process evaluation is perhaps the easiest type of evaluation to do. It concerns itself only with what is happening within the confines of the group interaction and does not concern itself with external matters. The process, however, is only important as it relates to the impact witnessed outside the group. As Dies (1985) indicated, one of the bridges that must be built in group research and practice is the bridge between process and outcome. Our attention therefore must turn to the outcomes of group process because only in the context of external results does the process have any value.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome is what happens in a group member's life as a result of experience in group counseling. Outcome shows how goals, purposes, and objectives for which the group is organized are manifested in terms of change or impact in group members' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The degree to which that change occurs determines the relative success or failure of the group process. Evaluation of outcomes is a difficult task because neither the treatment nor the subjects can be adequately controlled, and the evaluation criteria are often inappropriate. If change is observed the question of whether it was caused by the group is moot, and if no change occurs, one wonders if the criteria were valid.

Despite the difficulty, group counselors can do much to make evaluation of outcomes meaningful and concise in their own settings. It can be done by heeding the various warnings researchers have proffered, by making evaluation an inherent aspect of the group-counseling program, and by designing evaluation procedures specifically related to clients, the setting, and the nature of the counseling group. Some of the basic considerations of effective outcome evaluation are discussed in the following subtopics.

Importance of Goals. Although we have discussed goals in regard to organizing group programs, I must emphasize them further here because goals are the roots of effective outcome evaluation. This topic is introduced with an appropriate quotation and warning from Ohlsen (1970):

> A counselor may be tempted to use vague general goals, to select for groups only clients with some common goals, and to ignore individuals' unique goals when appraising clients' growth. . . .Such errors often account for a counselor's failure to obtain significant results when he [or she] tries to assess outcomes of group counseling. Carefully defined, precise goals stated in terms of measurable or observable outcomes are necessary if the counselor is adequately to assess changes in clients. (p. 43)

He continued by advising that group counselors should learn from the behavioral counselors:

> They have not attempted to improve the global adjustment of clients. They have merely focused their attention on one or two precise behaviors, for which they usually have adequate measuring devices to assess predicted changes. (p. 255)

Group counselors should address themselves to measuring change in individual members rather than on a total group basis. In this way individual assessment will add up to a composite of group change. Cohn (1967) advocated this approach, considering it the easiest way to demonstrate change as a result of group counseling. Specific goals for individuals in groups must be developed so that evaluation is on an individual basis leading to a cumulative group effect. In other words, general group goals are important in organizing a group program but specific individual goals are necessary to determine outcomes. This perspective is intrinsic to counseling since "counseling's worth rests on the notion of furthering individual development and helping individuals face and learn to deal with painful and distressing problems. Therefore appraisal must focus upon individual change" (Ohlsen, 1970, p. 256). Dinkmeyer and Muro (1979) add that each group member should be afforded the opportunity to define and clarify those goals that are unique to them within the context of the group.

So the message is clear: *to evaluate outcomes of group counseling accurately we must develop individual goals within the group process.* With this in mind let's turn our attention to implementation. Some counselors use the screening interview to help clients identify individual goals they wish to work toward in group counseling. Members then come to the first session with certain goals already specified. If this method is used, a natural initiating activity during the first session is to have members share their goals as a means of getting acquainted and establishing a work-oriented attitude among members.

Other counselors structure goal-setting sessions into the group-counseling process, during which each member discusses and selects specific goals on which to work. In this case not only are the counselor and the client aware of the person's goals, but the rest of the group also is cognizant of them as well.

Once individual goals are clarified and established, an excellent evaluative device is the behavioral contract (Dustin & George, 1973). Members are asked to specify in writing the actions they will take in an effort to achieve their goals. This contract negotiated in the group is then signed by the client and counselor and witnessed by the group. Each can receive a copy of the others' contracts so that the group can monitor progress and determine if a client successfully fulfilled the contract obligation. The contract idea allows adaptability for individual differences. It also has built in evaluative criteria and implies or even denotes evaluation procedures. As such its use is recommended as a procedure for outcome evaluation.

Another evaluation method that has great promise and utility for assessing individual change in counseling and therapy groups is called *Goal Attainment Scaling* (GAS) (See Figure 10.3). Developed by Kiresuk and Sherman (1968) and adapted to group counseling by Paritzky and Magoon (1982), GAS is a standard score device which translates any group member's goal into a measureable form using a 5 point scale from minus 2 (much worse than expected) to plus 2 (much better than expected). This procedure requires each group member to identify specific, concrete, measureable, problem-solving goals they want to attain. The individual's goal is then represented as 0 (expected outcome) and serves as the target for which the member is to strive. A reasonable unit of variation from the target is determined to complete the scale in increments of 1 unit per integer above or below the target. Progress is then periodically assessed by the members and leader. The overall objective is to demonstrate progress and ultimately to be on target. This procedure allows for individualized group member goals and provides a means of clearly identifying progress. Combining GAS scores across all group members demonstrates the overall effectiveness of the group counseling process.

Self-and Other-Reports. Two important sources of outcome data are the clients themselves and those important others who have extensive contacts with them. If change occurs, it must be recognized by the party who changes and by those interacted

Scale Value	Scale Level Descriptor	Specific Problem Solving Behavior
+ 2	Much Better Than Expected Outcome	
+ 1	Better Than Expected Outcome	
0	Expected Outcome	
— 1	Worse Than Expected Outcome	
— 2	Much Worse Than Expected Outcome	

Figure 10.3. Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS).

with. Cohn (1967) identified the distinguishing quality between self-reports and other-reports of client changes when he wrote, "In both cases subjectivity operates but in one case it is subjectivity of the [clients] involved, and in the other the subjectivity of a not-so-interested observer" [p. 31]. In other words self-and other-reports tend to have inherent bias due to their subjective nature, but this in no way precludes their importance to the evaluation of outcomes. In fact, these reports are really front-line evaluation procedures because of their kinship to the group process itself. Since group counseling is a people-oriented process, its effects have people-oriented meanings. Thus the counselor should be immensely interested in whether clients themselves think they have changed and whether others around them concur. Ample evidence is available to indicate that what one thinks and perceives affects what one does. These thoughts need to be gotten out in the open as a means of gauging the influence of the group process on members and to assess the reception of significant others to member changes. Once reports have been obtained their validity or invalidity can always be tested.

The self-report can take many forms ranging from feedback given directly to the counselor or group to the use of instruments like Q-sorts, rating scales, semantic differentials, or personality inventories. The general purpose is to provide a self-based evaluation of the client's experience or change. In many cases researchers have found that no changes were noted on the specified criteria but that group members reported positive reactions to their experience (Trotzer & Sease, 1971). Thus the self-report can serve an especially important function if discrepancies are found or if no changes are evident on other selected criteria. If discrepancies occur, the counselor must investigate the possible causes, which often leads to productive changes in the group process, individual members, or both. If no changes are noted on other criteria counselors are compelled to reassess their criteria in light of positive self-reports of group members.

As far as other-reports are concerned, Ohlsen (1970) pointed out that "when counseling is effective important others should notice some of the changes in behavior and attitudes" (p. 258). If those around the client perceive changes, most likely the change has been extensive enough to overcome the normal expectations that tend to resist acknowledgment of change. If others notice it, most likely it exists. But this fact prompts an additional motive for using self-and other-reports. Sometimes changes clients make have an adverse effect on their relationships with important others. Cohn (1967) stated that counselors must find out whether "changes in growth in a given member act as a freeing device for other persons to whom he [or she] significantly related or whether individual growth will cause a disruptive pattern in his [or her] group relationship outside of counseling" (p. 19). In the latter case the group member may need assistance in coping with problems related to changing.

Those persons involved in these evaluative reports are generally the clients themselves, parents and other family members, teachers, co-workers, colleagues, supervisors, and selected peers both in and out of the group. The counselor can use formal or informal methods in obtaining their reports. Formal methods might entail devising a brief rating sheet that concentrates on the specific problem area of the client and administering it periodically to the client and selected significant others. A comparison of the raters' perceptions of changes can then be made. This procedure is advantageous because it alerts those around the client to the client's efforts and generates more positive expectations. The balancing effect of both the client's and others' perspectives counters bias.

Other useful methods of acquiring "significant other" reports are Q-sorts, semantic differentials, rating scales, open-ended questionnaires, and structured face-to-face interviews. These procedures enable respondents to express their personal perspectives relative to the change process and provide a basis for determining whether change has occurred in the interpersonal realm of the members' experience. In most cases it is preferable to use methods involving both self-and other-perceptions in order to obtain a more comprehensive, balanced, and accurate evaluation of change.

Informal methods center around conversational contacts via interviews, telephone calls, visits, and spontaneous conversations during one's daily routine. These contacts also serve to help significant others develop positive expectations of client change. The counselor's consultative relationships are an integral part of these informal evaluation methods and therefore should be developed prior to obtaining specific information regarding client change.

Outcome Criteria. The selection of criteria for the evaluation of outcomes must be done in accord with the points already considered. The criteria must be adaptable to the individual goals of the client, not the client to the criteria. Criteria must be specific and observable or measurable so that it can be validated. Cohn (1967) added another guideline that criteria "should probably be limited to variables that can be demonstrated to have some rather direct bearing on the child's school performance" (p. 32). A more general application of this idea is that criteria chosen should have a direct impact on the client's performance in the setting in which the group is organized, and in the client's living environment. However, tangential criteria should not be excluded if they pertain to the individual goals of the client.

Cohn (1967) delineated two kinds of ***criteria, behavioral*** and ***affective*** (including attitudes, feelings, and values), both of which have relevance to group counseling. In schools the most readily available criteria are the educational variables of grades (in specific classes), grade-point average, and a host of standardized tests (especially achievement and aptitude). Numerous other tests and inventories also can be called on to measure a variety of other variables. Examples include acceptance of self and others (Berger, 1952), self-concept (*Tennessee Self-Concept Scale-Counseling Form*, Fitts, 1965), dogmatism (Rokeach, 1960), authoritarianism (*California F-Test*), and many other personality-type measures.

Before counselors choose to use any of these criteria or any other criteria they must ask the following questions: (1) Is this criteria merely convenient or does it actually measure a relevant variable? (2) Can this criteria be related specifically to the individual goals of the clients? (3) Is change in a positive direction on these criteria indicative of change that results in problem resolution? (4) Can results be described simply and clearly to the client and significant others? (5) Will results reflect the influence of the group-counseling process? If criteria are selected in this manner, the counselor will have a creditable basis on which to support claims regarding the efficacy of the group-counseling process.

Follow-up Procedures. Probably the most serious concern in the helping professions is whether positive change that is realized at the end of treatment is maintained over time. A related question is whether a latent effect occurs generating positive change sometime after the treatment is completed. These same questions plague the group counselor. Mahler (1969) felt that "if we use immediate criteria measures the outcomes of a short group-counseling program might be somewhat superficial" (p. 210). He stressed therefore that follow-up is more important than immediate results. Cohn's (1967) guidelines also emphasize that delayed evaluation is preferable.

The follow-up idea is extremely important in evaluation of group-counseling outcomes. Counselors should make every effort to maintain contact with their former group members over an extended period of time to keep tabs on whether changes (actual or professed at the close of group counseling) have been integrated into the client's life-style. This need not take an inordinate amount of time. But contact either personally or by questionnaire should be made, and records should be kept. Some counselors follow a general routine of contacting ex-group members after three months and again after six months. Others operate on a more casual basis with no specific schedule but keeping in touch with group clients over a period of time. Another method is to reconvene the entire group periodically for follow-up sessions to find out how members have progressed. These sessions often turn into extremely interesting and revealing interactions. In any event, the extent to which changes are retained is a good indicator of the potency of the group process in helping individuals resolve their problems.

SUMMARY

The key to effective evaluation of group counseling is to relate process and outcome. An overemphasis of one or the other, therefore, will be detrimental to both. A philosophy of multiple assessment will greatly increase the reliability and importance of evaluation procedures. Obtaining data and feedback from a variety of relevant sources serve to clarify the nature of the group process and delineate its effect on the group members. The three principal concepts to keep in mind are (1) make evaluation an inherent and established part of a group program; (2) develop relevant general goals based on assessed needs for organizing groups, but concentrate on specific individual goals to assess outcomes; and (3) utilize evaluation results to improve the group process, increase the expertise of the group leader, and establish group counseling as an accountable procedure in helping people solve their problems.

ILLUSTRATIVE GROUP COUNSELING EXAMPLE

An Interpersonal Problem-Solving Group in a Mental Health Center

The counseling group described below took place in a mental health center (Trotzer, 1985). The group consisted of ten adult members, six female and four male and was facilitated by a male-female co-leadership team. All group members were referred to group counseling by their individual therapists at the center. Group members had become involved in individual therapy for a variety of reasons but were referred to the group to work specifically on the interpersonal dimensions of their lives. The group met for a total of 30 hours including an intake/orientation interview, an exit interview, and fourteen two-hour group sessions over a four month period.

Overview of the Group Counseling Process

Orientation/Intake Interview. The co-leaders conducted an intake interview with each of the prospective group members for purposes of screening, orientation, and goal-setting. The individual's therapist also was contacted with the client's permission to obtain relevant information. During this one hour interview each client was helped to identify interpersonal problem areas in his or her life and asked to specify particular problems on which he or she wanted to work in the group. Ground rules for the group were explained and questions were answered. The client was introduced to the *Goal Attainment Scaling* (GAS) (Figure 10.3) process described earlier in this chapter, and a commitment to participate in the group was obtained.

Based on the content of the intake interviews the leaders determined to utilize a semi-structured approach to the group introducing specific activities related to relevant topics as well as providing for open-ended interaction. The nature of the clients' interpersonal problems indicated that attention to four specific interpersonal skill areas would be a helpful adjunct to the group counseling process. These areas were communication skills, social skills, assertiveness skills, and conflict resolution skills. Consequently two sessions were devoted to each of these areas. (Refer to Chapter 8 for a specific format for organizing a group counseling program.)

Sessions 1 and 2. These sessions were primarily devoted to the forming aspects of the group. Members became acquainted with one another through structured activities and began engaging in self-disclosure and giving feedback. Group rules were reiterated and clarified and time was devoted to making contact on a person-to-person basis.

Sessions 3 and 4. The focus of these sessions was on communication skills. Members engaged in lab activities related to active listening and practiced various forms of interpersonal communication (Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, 1975). Time also was spent identifying the various interpersonal problem areas in clients' lives which served as content for the process of learning effective communication skills.

Sessions 5 and 6. Social skills were emphasized in these sessions combining the use of role playing and behavior rehearsal with out-of-group tasks and assignments to facilitate the learning of social skills. The principle of in-group and out-of-group connectedness thus was established prior to any intensive consideration of interpersonal problems.

Sessions 7 and 8. Assertiveness principles and techniques were integrated into these sessions. Members practiced assertiveness skills in the group and targeted situations where they could use them outside the group.

Sessions 9 and 10. Lab activities teaching the various strategies of conflict resolution and helping group members identify their own tendencies in conflict situations were used. Conflict situations in each client's life were identified and analyzed from the viewpoint of effective conflict resolution. Conflict resolution contracts were drawn up for each member with respect to a relationship outside the group.

Note. The approximate ratio of structured activity to spontaneous interaction for these first ten sessions was 1 to 1½ hours structure and ½ to 1 hour open-ended. The last four sessions, however, were heavily oriented toward the open-ended form of interaction following the lead of members as they zeroed in on the specific problems in their lives.

Sessions 11-14. The focus of these sessions was directed by the content of problems on which group members were working. A check-in system was used where each group member updated the group as to his or her progress and indicated whether or not specific attention (time) was needed during the session. A goal board was constructed so that members could be quickly apprized of each other's goals and progress. Sessions were primarily work oriented and devoted to making plans, testing them in the social laboratory of the group, and reporting on their efforts outside the group. The final session involved reviewing individual and group progress, making commitments to continue working individually, and saying good-bye.

Exit Interview. An exit interview was conducted by the coleaders with each group member and centered around the *Goal Attainment Scale* procedure that had been introduced in the orientation session and developed during the group meetings. Emphasis was on helping the individual assess and take credit for his or her own efforts and change and determining the overall effectiveness of the group counseling process.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The learning activities described in this session are primarily designed to prepare the group counselor for the orientation aspects of organizing a group program. A secondary gain, however, is the development of leadership skills and expansion of the counselor's repertoire of group activities and experiences. Use these with Chapters 9 and 10.

Class Presentation

Using material from the various chapters of this book, prepare and deliver a 25-minute talk on group counseling designed to clarify potential clients' understanding of the group process and inspire their interest in joining. After the talk conduct a question-and-answer discussion in which class members, posing as possible clients, ask questions. Upon completion of this discussion ask the class to critique the presentation noting strengths, weaknesses, and possible omissions and revisions.

Staff Orientation

Have class members pose as teachers, referral sources, administrators, or parents and present a brief description (25 minutes) of the distinctions between different types of groups. Follow up the presentation with a demonstration that involves all or some of the members so that they will be able to experience the nature of one of the types of groups firsthand. Conduct a follow-up discussion to answer questions. Class members should try to anticipate typical questions teachers, administrators, referral sources or parents might ask the presenter. Finally critique the presentation.

Demonstration Videotape

Using class members or other persons develop a videotape that can be used to demonstrate the group-counseling process. Making it could be a class project with one member designated as the leader and other members playing various member roles. This tape can serve as a means of stimulating class discussion about the group process and the leadership role. It can be shown to counselors in the field, referral sources, teachers, administrators, and families to get their reactions and feedback. The tape also may be a useful resource to the counselor going into the field and could be duplicated for use on the job.

Demonstration Activities Project

Instruct each class member to compile a list of ten different group activities that could be used in classroom situations or staff orientation sessions to experientially present the group process.

These activities must be obtained from sources other than this book and must be written up in detail covering goals, materials needed, procedures and instructions, and the population for whom each activity is best suited. Each class member then can be asked to demonstrate one or two of the activities in class. Duplicating these papers so that each class member can have a copy is a good way of supplying invaluable material for future reference. These activities also will serve as a resource in leading groups since counselors will be able to adapt them readily to group sessions.

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Chapter 11

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN GROUPS

Structured activities in groups have emerged as a viable and integral component of group work and as a vital element in facilitating the group process (Bates, Johnson & Blaker, 1982; Corey, Corey, Callahan, & Russell, 1982; Jacobs, Harvill, & Masson, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988). Called variously group procedures or techniques, structured activities, catalytic activities, or human relation activities, they all can be subsumed under the general rubric of communication activities, the term we will use to identify them in this chapter. Although the genesis of communication activities is difficult to determine, the activities themselves have emanated from a wide range of psychological, sociological, communicational, and educational endeavors. Because of the growing reliance upon and use of communication activities and the increased awareness of their existence and utility in both professional circles and the public sector, a special need is for the group leader to have an understanding of their nature and use. Perhaps Bates, Johnson, and Blaker (1982), who call communication activities "catalytic activities", have stated the perspective toward communication activities best: "Catalysts are not the must important part of a leader's arsenal but they do provide added potential for leading creatively" (p. 162).

The proliferation of information regarding communication activities in the literature is almost at a saturation point. With the general emphasis on human relations training, the expansion and adaptation of the "growth group" on college campuses and in society at large, the appeal of encounter groups as a form of "white collar hippie movement" and the use of sensitivity training and quality circles in business and industry, the amount of professional material is almost overwhelming. However, the low key hysteria (both for and against) communication activities fanned in the sixties and seventies by the popular media (Howard, 1968; Human Potential, 1970) has evolved into a more solid perspective that emphasizes pragmatism, ethics, and conceptual validity. The initial confusion in the public sector and to some extent in professional circles as to use of communication activities in groups has largely been clarified. The mention of communication activities is less likely to conjure up comments about "touchy feely" experiences, brain washing, seduction or unethical practice, but such issues are still cause for concern because they represent a potential threat to group counseling and can curtail the effective use of communication activities in the helping process. This threat has long been recognized by many professionals in counseling and psychotherapy who strongly voiced the need to develop ethical standards and guidelines to regulate the use of these activities and to ensure leader competence (Lakin, 1969, 1970; *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 1972; Verplanck, 1970; Whiteley, 1970). Their concerns have produced the ethical and training standards that now epitomize both the training and the practice of professional group leaders with respect to communication activities (See Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

The purpose of this chapter is to address the nature and use of communication activities as a means of assisting group leaders in resolving the normal dilemmas that arise when consideration is given to using them in groups. The chapter will (1) present a model for categorizing communication activities, (2) discuss a rationale for their use, (3) identify guidelines for selection, (4) describe psychodrama as a particular form of communication activity, and (5) conclude with sample communication activities that reflect the chapter's contents.

CATEGORIZING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

No simple definition of communication activities exist. In fact, many different names are used to identify them, including human-relations activities, self-awareness activities, structured group-interaction techniques, and communication games. Whether they are called games, gimmicks, activities, techniques, or exercises, some characteristics do exist that distinguish them. For our purposes let's consider all these terms synonymous and concentrate on traits and use rather than on labels.

First, communication activities call for specific directions that give group members a format and/or a focus for their interaction. Whenever the leader makes "an explicit and directive request of a member for the purposes of focusing on material, augmenting or exaggerating affect, practicing behavior or solidifying insight" he or she is using a form of communication activity (Corey et al.,1982, p. 1). Second, communication activities often entail the use of materials for carrying out the activity (for example, pencils, paper, paint, objects and so forth). Finally, communication activities can be standardized to a large degree, enabling leaders to use them in adapted form with a minimum of alteration in a variety of group settings and with diverse clientele.

Leader Attitude Toward Communication Activities

The group leader's attitude toward communication activities should reflect a professional commitment to ethical standards and his or her personal responsibility to group members. Communication activities are only tools that must be used judiciously to enhance the group process for the benefit of group members. These activities are not mechanisms that should be exploited, used to generate emotional highs, or entertain group participants. Any experimentation should be done for specific purposes, such as determining the impact of a technique to ensure its most effective use in a group-counseling setting or familiarizing group leaders with an activity so that they have more confidence in using it. Communication activities should not become ends in themselves and should always relate directly to the group process and the needs of group members. They must be consistent with the rationale and philosophy of the group leader and have a specified purpose from a pragmatic (in group) and conceptual (theoretical) perception.

Identifying Traits of Communication Activities

In Figure 11.1 is presented a model comprised of two dimensions that is helpful in differentiating the nature of communication activities. The first relates to the ***focus*** of the activity and is divided into two parts, intrapersonal and interpersonal. ***Intrapersonal activities*** are designed to help people engage in the introspective process leading to greater

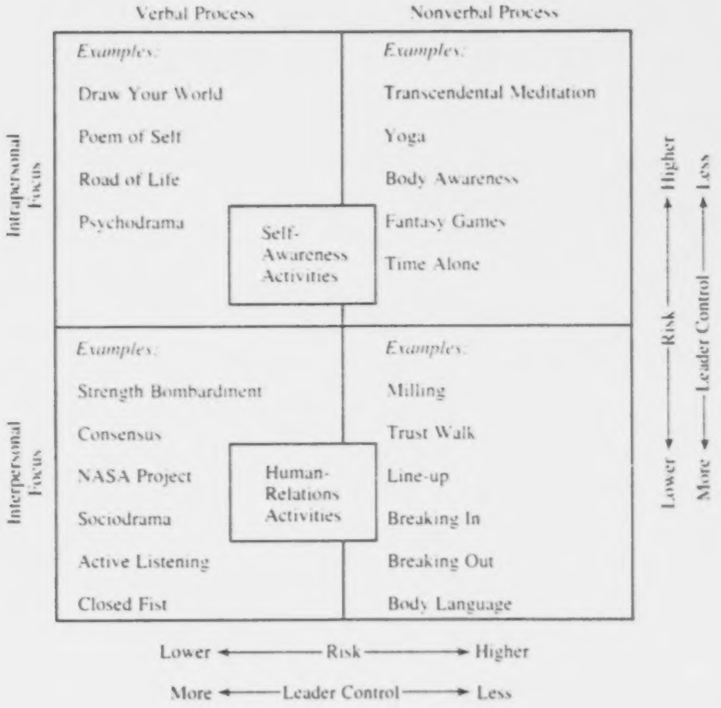
Verbal Process
Nonverbal Process
Intrapersonal Focus
Interpersonal Focus
Examples:
Draw Your World
Poem of Self
Road of Life
Psychodrama
Examples:
Transcendental Meditation
Yoga
Body Awareness
Fantasy Games
Time Alone
Self-Awareness Activities
Examples:
Strength Bombardment
Consensus
NASA Project
Sociodrama
Active Listening
Closed Fist
Examples:
Milling
Trust Walk
Line-up
Breaking In
Breaking Out
Body Language
Human-Relations Activities
Lower ← Risk → Higher
More ← Leader Control → Less
Lower ← Risk → Higher
More ← Leader Control → Less

Figure 11.1. Categorizing Communication Activities. (Adapted) from a model presented by Roy Evans, Clinical Psychologist, Minnesota State Prison, during a group-counseling workshop at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Summer, 1972. Reprinted by permission of Mr. Roy Evans.)

self-knowledge. They emphasize a greater understanding of one's inner self as the basis for making constructive decisions, living a more effective life, changing one's feelings, thoughts, or behavior, and actualizing one's potential. They stress personal learning about the subject of self. ***Interpersonal activities*** are designed to help people explore, understand, and improve their relationships with others. Their focus is on the social self and human relationships. Activities revolve around interpersonal interaction, and emphasis is on relational qualities and characteristics that enhance effective communication, promote meaningful human encounters, and facilitate meeting social-psychological needs.

The second dimension involves the ***process*** of communication used in the activity and is divided into verbal and nonverbal categories. ***Verbal activities*** concentrate on the use of words as the primary means of communication. The form of verbal exchange may make use of either the speaking or writing capacities of the participants. ***Nonverbal activities*** encompass a broad range of mediums from art forms to body language to internal-communication processes. The nonverbal dimension of communication activities is identified by the fact that the primary action takes place without the use of or dependence on words.

The combination of these two dimensions provides us with a perspective for assessing the nature of communication activities. ***Verbal intrapersonal activities*** help individuals examine themselves and then verbally share their perceptions in the form of self-disclosure. Examples include such activities as "Draw Your World," "Poem of Self," "Road of Life," and "Life Story." Psychodrama is a very sophisticated form of this type of activity. ***Nonverbal intrapersonal activities*** provide a format for introspection but the experience takes place totally within the confines of the individual and is not accessible to others except through that person's verbal interpretation of what was experienced. Examples include meditation, yoga, body-awareness exercises, "Fantasy Games" (Schutz, 1967), and "Time Alone" (Katz, 1973). Most of these activities include some type of sharing, but their main thrust is on providing each person with an internal experience for personal enrichment and learning.

Verbal-interpersonal activities are designed to engage people in interaction with others and are characterized by dependence on verbal feedback and sharing. Examples include "Strength Bombardment," "Consensus," "Active Listening," and "The Closed Fist." Sociodrama is a form of this type of exercise but in an expanded sense. Sociodrama focuses on common problems in social relationships that all group members can benefit from working on and uses mainly verbal role-playing techniques to do so. ***Nonverbal interpersonal activities*** are designed to provide members with experiences in interpersonal relationships without using the normal communication channel of words. Although these activities usually entail a verbal follow-up, the main action takes place during the activity. Any clarification, interpretation, sharing, or feedback takes place after the experience, which is subject to modification when translated into the verbal domain. Activities such as "Trust Walk," "Milling," "Lineup," "Breaking In," and body-language activities are examples.

Generally speaking we can classify all verbal and nonverbal intrapersonal activities as self-awareness activities. Similarly, verbal and nonverbal interpersonal activities can be labeled human-relations activities. No absolute rigidity exists in this model because many activities include both verbal and nonverbal components and some also may incorporate all four quadrants of the diagram. Also, many exercises can be altered to fit the various categories with just a little imagination on the part of the group leader. In effect then this model is a reference for determining the characteristics of communication activities. As such it is a useful resource in training group leaders to select and use communication exercises in groups.

Some specific considerations of this model have direct relevance to group counseling. The group-counseling process is primarily a verbal process whose effectiveness depends on communication among group members. Therefore the leader must always incorporate a verbal sharing component into any activity that is used.

Activities should always end up in the verbal-interpersonal realm. This facilitates greater group cohesiveness and communication and alleviates problems of member dissociation that sometimes occur, especially with nonverbal and intrapersonal activities. It also enables members to benefit from each other's experiences and encourages modeling and identification.

Two underlying continuums also are part of this model and warrant careful attention by the group leader. The first is the ***element of risk*** involved in using these activities. At the beginning of the Chapter I mentioned some general concerns with communication activities but here I can be more specific. Verbal activities are less risky than nonverbal in the perception of both group members and significant others outside the group. This is especially true in school situations and with adolescent groups. Nonverbal activities should be carefully selected and used judiciously. Extensive physical contact and physically dangerous activities should be avoided. Risk also is somewhat higher in intrapersonal activities than in interpersonal ones. The risk here is psychological in nature because of the focus on self-disclosure. Usually a person can give feedback easier than self-disclosing and can talk more easily about what is happening between people than engaging in introspection. In other words, low-level self-assessment activities and interpersonal activities should take precedence over exercises requiring in-depth self-disclosure until the group is ready for them. In this way an atmosphere of trust and acceptance can be established, which reduces the risk of sharing the more private thoughts about one's self and one's problems.

Bates, Johnson, and Blaker (1982) in adapting this model noted that a within quadrant intensity factor mirrors the overall risk dimension. Within each section activities can be refined more definitively on the basis of being of low, medium, or high intensity. Group leaders can thus select activities that are appropriate to the level of group interaction and commensurate with the nature of group dynamics.

The second continuum is ***leader control.*** The amount of control the leader has in guiding, facilitating, and limiting the interaction in using communication activities is directly related to their nature. Verbal activities lend themselves to much greater control than do nonverbal. At least when members are talking the leader can tune in to consistencies and discrepancies between members' words and their experiences. In nonverbal activities much of this awareness can be lost or hidden. And nonverbal communication by its very nature is much more difficult to follow anyway. Because the experience takes place without the usual verbal cues of the expressive domain, the leader has less contact with it. Similarly interpersonal activities are more conducive than intrapersonal to leader direction, especially in the nonverbal-intrapersonal area. To maintain a common level of involvement in these activities is difficult because some members may go very deep and others may do nothing. The result thus can be detrimental to group cohesiveness.

These considerations should not deter group leaders from using communication activities in their group, but they should be aware of them and take them into account in choosing and implementing activities. Risk will always be involved because growth can't occur without it. Control problems always will exist because of individual uniqueness, the diversity of member commitment and involvement, and the nature of the group process. Leaders must act to reduce these problems by carefully utilizing techniques that are consistent with their philosophy and rationale of group counseling and that are best suited to the needs of the group members.

RATIONALE AND USE OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

By viewing the group as an on-going developmental process and each group session as a mini-reflection of that process, we can build a rationale for using communication activities. This rationale provides a framework that encompasses individual differences in group-leadership styles and can help alleviate problems of explanation and justification for the group leader. To relate communication activities to the group-counseling process, we will discuss their purpose and how they are introduced into the group. The three basic ways of using communication exercises are (1) to initiate, (2) to facilitate, and (3) to terminate. Each will be described separately (Trotzer, 1973).

Initiation

Communication activities can be used in group counseling to initiate the group process. This includes beginning the overall group process, starting individual sessions within that process, and interjecting a new or different focus during the group session. For example, at the first session of a ten-session counseling group of graduate students in counseling, the leader asked members to describe themselves in the third person as if they were their best friend. The members described themselves using their first names and "he" or "she" rather than "I" or "me." In this way the leader initiated an activity that set the tone for both that particular session and the overall group process. Members began the process of getting to know one another and sharing themselves with others. The self-consciousness created by the newness of the group and having to talk about themselves was lessened because members could step outside themselves and speak more objectively. This example points out one of the purposes in initiating activities in that members were given a structured format within which they had a common experience. Some of the discomfort of beginning the group was lessened, and the common focus established a basis on which the group process could build.

A second purpose for using communication activities to initiate is to orient the group toward a topic that will be useful to effective group functioning and the helping process. The intent is not to precipitate anything in the group but rather to aid the group members in learning to function as a group. For example, a group of male high school juniors was formed because of their disruptive classroom behavior. They exhibited a great deal of discomfort, resistance, and distrust during their first two sessions. The counselor suggested the trust walk as an initiating activity for the third session. The trust walk made the issue of trust concrete since each individual experienced being dependent on another person and being responsible for another person. When the activity was over, the leader helped group members express their feelings about the experience and make the transition from being trusting and trustworthy in the activity to being so in the group and in their own lives.

Using communication activities to start group interaction lessens the discomfort created by the ambiguity of an unstructured situation. Members are able to loosen up and lower interpersonal barriers, thus opening channels of communication that can subsequently be used to confront and resolve problems in the group. Also, the simulation experience and modeling effect of the activities help group members learn important aspects of effective interpersonal communication and group dynamics.

Counselors who use communication activities to initiate group interaction gain the benefit of group control. They become the experts who direct the group interaction, and responsibility is lifted from the members' shoulders. The counselor becomes the guide, and members become the guided. Structuring group interaction by using an activity gives the counselor a better sense of what is going on and what to expect. This provides the leader with a kind of security that is not as readily accessible to the leader who does not initiate. Leaders who are more comfortable and effective in structured settings or who want to "make things happen" (Poppen & Thompson, 1974) tend to use more initiating activities. In fact, some leaders resemble orchestra conductors, putting together activity after activity and molding and directing the group process from start to finish.

One drawback to using communication activities for initiating purposes is that the counselor may create a dependency situation in which members expect the counselor to provide the direction all the time. To circumvent this possibility, the leader must be able to integrate the initiating activity into the group process and facilitate the shift of responsibility back to the members. The communication activity should not be an isolated experience but an integral part of the life cycle of the counseling group.

Another difficulty is in choosing appropriate initiating activities. The counselor's choice of an activity should be based on his or her knowledge of both the group process and the unique qualities of group members. For best results, leaders should choose activities with which they are familiar. Even then, at times an activity will not be effective. This situation is more likely avoided if the leader maintains a tentative attitude when suggesting activities and remains sensitive to the group's reaction as the activities are being described. Leader willingness to alter or change the activity based on members' reactions usually enhances success. Having more than one activity in mind also gives the leader flexibility in dealing with situations created by member resistance or by the failure of a particular activity.

Finally, when leaders use initiating activities they provide members with targets toward which to direct their resistance. They can grasp the opportunity to be uncooperative in a very specific way. However, resistance is normal and if the leader is prepared for it the activity also can serve as a means of dealing with it in a constructive manner. Since members know clearly what is expected of them, they can direct their resistance at a nonpersonal target but also are likely to experience group pressure to participate. The end result is that through the activity members often find their reasons for resistance are unwarranted and can comfortably make the transition from resistance to cooperation and involvement.

Facilitation

The primary purpose of using communication activities to facilitate is to help the group use its resources to the fullest extent (Poppen & Thompson, 1974). For example, a group of sixth-grade girls who were central figures in cliques found it difficult to talk to one another without getting into heated arguments. The group leader used "active listening" as an activity to help them learn listening skills and thereby improve their communication with one another. The girls not only began to relate to each other in the group but used their listening skills with noticeable effect in the classroom.

The main point to keep in mind when using communication activities to facilitate the group-counseling process is that the activities should be derived or suggested in response to a situation that has emerged in the group. A typical facilitating activity is role-playing. Role-playing is a procedure in which a problem is dealt with by having the principal involved act it out in the safety of the group with other members participating as actors or observers. For example, a ninth grade girl was discussing her problem of communication with her parents about dating and curfews. The counselor asked the girl to role-play a typical conversation with her parents on this topic, using other members as auxiliaries. The counselor directed the role-playing by keeping the actors in character and manipulating them through the use of role reversals, alter egos, and role substitutions. When the role-playing was over the leader facilitated a follow-up discussion to consolidate what had transpired regarding the problem. In this particular case, role-playing also was used to help the girl try out some alternative approaches to the problem.

Facilitating activities help to clarify problem situations, present alternatives, alleviate anxiety-producing circumstances, and break through impasses that occur in groups. They can be used to perk up the group interaction when normal communication channels break down. They can help a group consider an issue that they feel is relevant but don't know how to approach. Facilitation procedures should be catalytic, stimulating, and enhancing to group interaction without creating a noticeable structure that will distract members from their stated purpose.

Facilitating activities usually enjoy ready acceptance by group members. Because they are based directly on the interaction of the group, their probability of success is increased. Since facilitating activities are designed to provide avenues for reaching goals set by the group and do not suggest content, the group experiences an autonomy and responsibility with respect to the nature and focus of the material discussed. Facilitating techniques thus help members learn their responsibility in the group and at the same time help the leader establish guidelines and boundaries within which the group interaction occurs.

The facilitative use of communication activities is difficult to master. Its relevance and effectiveness is dependent on the leader's spontaneity and sensitivity in here-and-now situations. The leader must exhibit a willingness to follow and respond rather than lead and direct. A facilitative leader must have a capacity to tolerate ambiguity, allowing the group to take responsibility for its own direction. Responding effectively requires a knowledge and awareness of numerous activities that are usable in groups. This knowledge should include details of procedure, applicability, and probable effect of each activity. The ability to respond with the right activity at the right time has to be developed through experience in the leadership role.

Termination

Communication activities are useful at the end of individual group sessions, when individual members terminate, and when the total group is being disbanded. In all cases their major purpose is to consolidate and integrate what has been learned in the group. More specifically, they help members clarify and review what has transpired, provide reinforcement for changes that have been made, and encourage members to implement them in their daily lives.

Terminating activities that bring closure to a group provide a jumping-off place for members. For example, a go-round at the end of a session asking members for their reactions to the session or to the problems or topic under consideration creates a format in which members can express their feelings before the group disperses. An activity such as this aids both the leader and members in understanding where the group is and provides a natural ending point.

The impact of termination activities removes some of the awkwardness associated with closure. It helps individual members say good-by and gives the group an opportunity to send them off on a positive note. For example, a member of a therapy group for prison inmates obtained a parole. At the member's last session, the leader suggested an adaptation of the "hope chest" activity in which group members presented the departing member with symbolic gifts they felt would enhance his success in readjusting to society. The gifts served to pinpoint the gains he had made and warned of weaknesses that still needed to be attended. In addition, the positive feelings generated had a remarkable effect on the group itself that was evident in their efforts to work on their problems during the following weeks.

When a group is being disbanded members usually recognize that termination is called for but experience some ambivalence about it, especially if intimacy and cohesiveness have developed in the group. This desire to "end but not yet" triggers the enthusiastic involvement typifying the ending phase of a group and may even result in members suggesting their own closing activities. For example, during the final session of a group of college freshmen who were having a difficult time adjusting to a large university, one member suggested that each member show how he or she felt about every other member. Members individually went around the group expressing their feelings toward each other, first nonverbally and then verbally. This activity clarified the relationships between individual members and also focused on their learning in the area of developing relationships.

Ambivalent feelings about terminating also may affect group leaders. They may feel reluctant to disband a group because of the difficulty and effort involved in getting it to function effectively. Or they may feel that something the group or an individual in the group needs for a more complete or well-rounded experience has been overlooked or neglected. In either case a closing activity may be useful. For example, during the course of a human-relations group composed of high school seniors, the group members had looked critically at themselves and each other offering constructive criticism to each other but focusing primarily on their weaknesses in relating to others. The leader felt a balance was needed, and he also felt a great deal of personal involvement in the group. Therefore, he suggested a segment of the technique called "strength bombardment" in which every member including the leader gave every other member only positive feedback. This activity helped to remove some doubts that members had about relating to others and served to strike a balance between critical and positive feedback. It brought the group together and helped them realize how much they had learned about themselves and each other. It also showed emphatically that, regardless of difficulties a person may have to resolve, strengths and other good qualities can aid and sustain them in that process.

Termination activities involve very little risk. The group is generally cohesive and cooperative at this point, ensuring the effectiveness of most activities suggested. And since members recognize that the group is ending, the chances of opening new problems or going overboard emotionally are small. One drawback is that the high degree of closeness and satisfaction the group may experience may not be present in the daily lives of individual members. This could create distortion in their perceptions of the group-counseling process and temporarily block out the effort that was involved in getting to the ending point. It may even give rise to wishes to prolong the group, which the leader must handle warmly but firmly. This reaction is a normal phenomenon associated with the completion of difficult but successful projects and is soon replaced with a more realistic perspective.

Flexibility of Communication Activities

Many communication activities can be used in all of the ways previously described. They can be revised and adapted to fit into the group process as initiating, facilitating, or terminating activities. Most also can be redesigned to conform to a leader's particular style or to meet the unique needs of a particular group. The main point is that all communication activities are intended to provide a means by which group members can interact with each other (Blaker & Samo, 1973). They can and do add flexibility and breadth to the group-counseling process. But it must be remembered that the focus of the group is on persons and purposes—in that order—and that communication activities are only important and useful to the extent they contribute to the therapeutic growth of individuals in the group and resolution of problems for which the group was formed.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The group-counseling process can be greatly enhanced by the proper selection and judicious use of communication activities. However, naive and careless use of activities casts a bad reflection on the counselor and the group-counseling process and may endanger group members in a psychological, moral, or physical sense.

Blaker and Samo (1973) warned that communication games can become ends in themselves in the hands of incompetent leaders who discover their potential for reducing inhibitions. However, communication activities do aid the group process if selected for a specific purpose and introduced in the right way (Trotzer, 1973). The following guidelines are designed to help the group leader make wise choices in selecting communication activities for use in the group-counseling process (Trotzer & Kassera, 1973).

1. Select activities on the basis of their purpose, relevance, and desired outcome.

This is the most important rule and supersedes all other considerations. Communication activities should not be implemented because they produce emotional highs. All too frequently popularity and familiarity are the only bases for selecting an exercise rather than the why and wherefore of its use. The impact of an activity should be considered above all else, and if that impact is not in accord with the needs of the members and the purposes of the group, the activity should not be used.

2. Select activities that have a solid conceptual framework and rationale relative to human growth and development.

Activities should not be selected on the basis of pragmatism alone. Each activity also should have a psychological conceptual basis that validates its use from a theoretical perspective. This guideline serves as a check and balance to the often intuitive use of structured activities that can initiate interactions that are not consistent with principles of human growth and development, the group leader's philosophy, and/or the psychological rationale of the group.

3. Select activities that are familiar and comfortable for you to use.

The enthusiasm and confidence of the leader in presenting an activity are often the cues that mark its reception by the members. The leader's discomfort with a technique will be picked up by the group and could cause resistance and even failure with its use. Activities that have been experienced should take precedence over those that have been observed or read about. Don't use techniques you have heard about just to see what will happen. To increase your repertoire of activities, first attempt new techniques under controlled conditions so that the process can be carefully observed and the outcome will have little possibility of being disruptive.

4. Select activities that are primarily verbal rather than physical.

Physical contact is often the first issue raised against the use of communication activities in group counseling and should be included only after very careful consideration. From a leader's perspective, Birnbaum (1969) noted that nonverbal techniques require a minimum of experience and knowledge to stimulate an initial response but demand a maximum of expert knowledge and sophistication to extract a positive educational outcome. The fact is that most desired outcomes in group counseling can be attained either by verbal activities or nonverbal activities involving a minimum of physical contact. For example, hand holding in a "trust walk" is acceptable, but the extended physical contact of an activity such as "body sculpturing" (Shutz, 1967) is better avoided. Remember that any nonverbal activity should always involve a verbal sharing component. This enables the leader to assess more accurately the effect of the activity and to make the necessary adjustments to handle problems.

5. Select activities that do not require labels or can be labeled with terms that do not carry the possibility of a negative stigma.

Many times people react to the connotations of names without knowing the real nature of the process to which the name is given. In selecting and discussing activities, group leaders should take that tendency into account. Often the same activity can have many different labels. "Let's see if you can show us how you reacted in that situation" could be termed psychodrama, socio-drama, or role-playing. However, there is a considerable difference in connotation between labeling it psychodrama as opposed to role-playing. Activities selected should be explained in everyday language or in neutral terms.

6. Select activities commensurate with the maturity level of group members.

The members' ability to immerse themselves in an activity without undue difficulty, tension, or embarrassment is extremely important to the effective use of any technique. Similarly, the activity should have characteristics that appeal to members' interests. If members feel they are being manipulated, talked down to, or treated without respect, they will resist and shun involvement. If the activity itself is unattractive, they will lose interest or be easily distracted. For example, the use of puppets to aid third-graders in exploring their feelings may be more effective than role-playing. Eighth-graders, however, would probably prefer role-playing, and adults may benefit from a full blown psychodrama integrated into the session. If a leader feels a particular activity has merit and accomplishes a desired purpose, it can most likely be modified to fit the age level and maturity of the group. If fact, this type of leader action is constructive because it indicates the leader is person-oriented rather than technique-oriented and is willing to alter activities to meet the needs of the group.

7. Select activities that are adaptable to the physical setting in which the group is meeting.

If the physical setting does not allow for an activity to be fully experienced or interferes with its being carried out, the activity should be avoided. For a large group that meets in a small room, using dyads for a verbal activity requiring high concentration may create confusion and interfere with accomplishing the purpose intended. Similarly, techniques that require members to leave the room should be carefully screened and explained and are best avoided if any indications are present that clients may not be able to handle the activity responsibly. The loss of leader control in these activities could result in misunderstanding from outside observers who witness the actions of group members as well as from the member themselves.

8. Select activities that allow for maximum member participation.

Some activities require physical skills or emotional endurance that may be frightening, distasteful, or overtaxing to some group members. Physical activities always should be prefaced with a caution to members and an option to observe rather than participate. Strenuous activities are best avoided. Activities that involve elements of embarrassment should be used only when members have been advised in advance of these factors. For example, for some activities all members might prefer to wear slacks. Selection should take into account the psychological, intellectual and experiential levels of group members. Techniques requiring extensive self-disclosure and feedback may not allow for maximum participation if members are at different levels with respect to trust and acceptance or if they have varied skill capacities or experiential contact with communication activities.

9. Select activities that allow group members to control their own involvement.

Guideline 8 is directed at external factors that must be considered to promote maximum member participation in an activity. Guideline 9 focuses on internal factors that allow for maximum involvement by each individual member. Communication activities should promote personal freedom by reducing inhibition. Techniques that force members to do something they are not ready for or something too threatening should be avoided. Birnbaum (1969) pointed out that confrontation techniques, for example, are easy to implement but very difficult to handle constructively because of the psychological pressure placed on individuals being confronted. Members should be allowed to decide how they will involve themselves and to what depth they will go. Activities that interfere with an individuals right to personal privacy should not be used in group counseling.

10. Select activities that will result in outcomes you are sure the group and you as a leader can handle.

Activities that precipitate the expression of strong feelings are always risky and should be used with extreme caution. If the possibility of loss of control is apparent in the use of any technique, it is best avoided. Leaders must always consider their own capabilities and the composition of the group in selecting activities. As member involvement increases and leader experience expands, the range and depth of activities that can be effectively utilized increases. However, experience is not a license to experiment freely; it is rather a safeguard against the inappropriate handling of member reactions.

11. Select activities that can be culminated in the time available in the group meeting.

Leaders should have a good idea about how much time is necessary to fully implement an activity. Nothing is more frustrating to a leader or to group members than to run out of time in the middle of an activity in which everyone is involved and interested. Select activities that can be presented, experienced, and discussed during time limits of the group. Don't begin an activity that can't be worked through before the session ends. And hurrying to get through an activity usually defeats its whole purpose by forcing members to concentrate on the activity rather than on each other. If an activity has not been satisfactorily concluded at the end of the time period, sometimes the better procedure is to hold the group over rather than to have members leave with misunderstandings that have been unresolved.

12. Select activities that are easily processable and integrated effectively into the flow of group interaction.

In order to counter the myopic tendencies produced by structured activities, select communication activities on the basis of their processability. Key processability features are (1) the interaction generated is reflective of the group process, and (2) the content is relevant to group member problems. Activities that produce experiences which the leader and members can effectively integrate into the flow of the group interaction are preferable to those that are self-contained or require extensive translation to make them fit. A distinctive trait of a processable activity is that the group moves directly back into their interactive pattern without spending time and energy finishing or closing the activity.

PSYCHODRAMA: A SPECIAL FORM OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

Psychodrama is both a group process in and of itself and a tool to be used in the context of group counseling and therapy. As such, it is the most sophisticated and elegant form of communication activity and therefore merits separate consideration in the context of this chapter.

Psychodrama was conceived and nurtured into being by Viennese psychiatrist, J.L. Moreno (1964) who brought it with him to New York in 1925. Using the tools of the stage and the conceptual framework of psychology he and his students developed psychodrama into an entity in and of itself with wide ranging application to therapy across many populations and settings. Psychodrama is now an approach to therapy with training programs and skilled practitioners who practice it exclusively. However, it is also a viable tool for group leaders to learn and use in the context of other group process applications.

The calling card or signal identifying trait of psychodrama is "action". It is a form of therapy or training in which participants enact or re-enact situations in their lives that are of emotional significance to them. The process is active, not passive, relying on behavioral expression rather than verbal description. The environment (where the action takes place) provides free space that can be used expressively whether it occurs in an office, in a classroom, or on a stage. The main actor essentially performs therapy on himself or herself.

The key conceptual dynamic of psychodrama is known as "surplus reality." This term refers to the perspective that whatever is occurring in the action whether it is drawn from the past, present, or future, and whether it represents reality or fantasy, it is all happening in the here and now. As such, the present is expanded experientially to encompass the whole of life experience.

Psychodrama has a distinct quality that enables greater honesty to occur with less effort. It requires more energy and purposeful honesty to disclose what cannot be seen by others (that which occurs outside the group or is hidden inside the person) than to acknowledge what is occurring before the group in the here and now. Thus, psychodrama is useful in helping people deal with issues in their lives that are often harder to talk about than to act out.

Techniques

Psychodrama can be credited with the development and adaptation of numerous techniques that have utility to the group practitioner whether the form of psychodrama is applied or not. Several examples are briefly described in the following subtopics.

The Soliloquy. Taken from drama where an actor steps out of the context of the play to express a supplementary perspective to the audience, this technique is essentially designed to help a client think out loud.

The Double. Another person assumes the place of the main actor to assist him or her in expressing their experiences. The double plays a key role in helping that which cannot be expressed to emerge and bringing out distortions in that which is expressed. The double can take many forms such as the following:

1. Colorless double: relies primarily on restatement
2. Satirical double: uses humor and paradox in responding
3. Passionate double: expresses the emotions of the main character
4. Oppositional double: takes an opposing side in order to create a dialog between sides
5. Physical double: mirrors gestures, behavior, and body language

6. Multiple double: represent different aspects of the person such as their past, present, and future or their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The double is also referred to as the "alter ego" to emphasize the role as an extension of the person who is the central focus.

Magic Shop. This technique casts the therapist or other group member in the role of a shopkeeper who barters with clients for qualities, values, experiences they want based on the principle that they must give something valuable (pay a price) to get something valuable. (Additional techniques are described in the learning activities section of this chapter).

The psychodrama process is composed of five elements and three phases which combine to create the therapeutic context.

Five elements

The Stage. The stage is the arena of action. Everything that happens on it occurs in the here and now. It is a space limited only by the imagination and creativity of participants and the director. It is the area where the drama occurs and is differentiated from the area which contains the observers or audience.

The Protagonist. The protagonist is the main actor, the star of the psychodrama. He or she is the one who is working through their own problem or issue in action. He or she is performing therapy on himself or herself, but is also the one who defines the limits of the drama (is in charge of how far the action will go). The protagonist acts out his or her problem from a subjective point of view.

The Auxiliaries. The auxiliaries are the extensions of the world of the protagonist. They are the supporting cast who assist the protagonist in carrying out their drama. Operating from an objective point of view the auxiliaries perform three important supplementary functions besides assisting the protagonist. They provide support for the protagonist, they give input to the director, and they are therapeutic agents to the main actor helping him or her clarify, understand, and modify their life experience. More skill is required of auxiliaries than of protagonists which is one reason that trained auxiliaries are often planted in groups that utilize psychodrama.

The Director. The director is the one in charge of producing the drama. He or she has the technical skills and tools necessary to help the protagonist act out his or her story and mobilize auxiliaries to that end. The director is in charge of the entire process of the psychodrama not just the action. He or she plays three key roles in the process. Besides being producer, he or she is also analyst and therapist merging, combining, and separating these roles in the best interests of the main actor. The director must not only be skilled in psychodrama, but must be able to trust it as the final arbiter and guide in the therapeutic process (Moreno, n.d.).

The Audience. The audience represents the world and is the source for both protagonists and auxiliaries. Audience members are all participants even if their role is that of spectator. They are particularly essential with respect to the sharing phase of psychodrama where the audience gives back to the protagonist in exchange for that which was given.

Three Phases

The Warm-up. Purposes of the warm-up phase are to assist participants in connecting with each other, develop an atmosphere of rapport and safety, and generate content out of which can emerge the selection of a protagonist. As such, the security stage tasks of getting acquainted, interpersonal warm-up, and trust building are addressed along with the acceptance stage tasks of personal sharing and building cohesiveness and closeness.

The warm-up is the pre-cursor to the action and sets the atmosphere in which the drama can unfold. It usually involves a structured activity that will generate personal content in the form of issues or problems that will lend themselves to being acted out in a psychodrama. Many of the activities at the end of chapters in this book are effective tools for the warm-up phase of psychodrama. The key to the warm-up is generating interaction between participants that enables them to open up and assists the director in identifying a potential protagonist.

The Drama. The drama phase is the action or core of psychodrama. Once the protagonist has been elicited he or she works together with the director to act out the story. The arena is divided into stage and audience and the play is carried out to a suitable end point using auxiliaries as appropriate.

The Sharing. Once the protagonist has reached the climax and end of his or her story, the final phase of the psychodrama is invoked by the director. This is the follow-up to the drama where the audience shares with the protagonist what his or her story has meant to them. This is not a time for analysis, advice-giving, or therapy. It is a time when members of the audience give a "piece of themselves" to the main actor. This is crucial to closure for both the protagonist and the audience and is the phase in which the impact of the drama is generalized beyond the designated client-protagonist.

Phases of psychodrama are recycled each time a drama is enacted much like groups recycle stages as they evolve to deeper or different levels of interaction. But, each of these phases and each of these elements are central to its effective use. Training in psychodrama is eminently available and a recommended adjunct to group leadership training. Much of the psychodrama literature (especially that of J.L. Moreno and Zerka Moreno) is published by and available from Beacon House, Inc., P.O. Box 311, Beacon, NY 12508. Additional resources are Greenberg (1974) and Leveton (1977).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Resources for finding communication activities to utilize in group work abound. Some of them are Johnson (1981); Johnson and Johnson (1987); Pfeiffer and Jones (1972-80); Bates, Johnson, and Blaker (1982); Jacobs, Harvill, and Masson (1988); Stevens (1972); Simon, Howe, and Kirchenbaum (1972); and Thompson and Poppen (1979). However, selection and implementation are the bailiwick of the professional leader.

Communication activities are valuable tools in facilitating the group process and improving individual self-understanding. They contribute to the helping process and give both leaders and members a means of coping with problems that are a part of therapeutic group interaction. There are, however, precautions that must be considered. These activities should not be viewed as an end in themselves but rather as means to an end. They should be used with considerable discretion and only in the context of ethical practice.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Communication activities described in the following pages are organized around their primary use in initiating, facilitating, or terminating the group process. Remember, however, that these activities are flexible and can be used in ways other than described here.

Initiation

Describe Yourself as Your Own Best Friend. The purpose of this activity is to help members get to know one another through the process of self-disclosure. The anxiety of talking about oneself is reduced by the objective third-person approach, which helps members cope with the discomfort of the group environment and feelings of self-consciousness.

Have group members, individually, describe themselves as their own best friend using their name ("This is my friend John. . .") and third person pronoun referents (he or she). Each member can be his or her own best friend or describe self as a best friend would. After each person has completed his or her description, other members can ask questions to obtain information or clarify information. These questions are also in the form of the third person. ("What does John like about himself?") The person responds to the questions in the third person. The leader's role is to help members maintain the third-person approach and to ask leading questions as a guide for other members. Also an effective approach is to have the leader be the first person to do the activity. In this way he or she can set the tone for the group, model self-disclosure, and demonstrate how the activity should be done.

Name Tags, "able" and "ing." This is a good beginning activity, especially in groups where members are not familiar with each other (Kranzow, 1973). Have members make name tags that list their names, three words ending in "ing," and three words ending in "able." The six words should describe their personalities (interesting, loving, irritable, likable). Encourage members to be creative and develop words that best fit their personality (funning, angerable). After name tags are completed have members introduce themselves to one another. ("My name is Toni, and I am fascinating. . ." or "I see your name is John, and you are memorable. . . ."). After the participants have had the opportunity to meet each other, convene the total group and have the members explain why they chose the words they did. Other group members also can respond by adding "ing" or "able" words they think are appropriate to individual members.

Building Blocks Go-Round. This is another good initiating activity that breaks the ice of a new group and helps members get to know each other—at least by name—very quickly. Sit in a circle and have one member start by stating his name. The person next to him must repeat the first member's name and then her own. This continues with each person repeating the names of every preceding person until each member can flawlessly state every other person's name in the group. Then add a piece of information, such as how each is feeling at the moment, and repeat the entire process using names and feelings. You can continue to build in this way, adding categories such as major interest, goal in life, main concern, marital status, job, and so forth. Choose items of information that will be most conducive to group growth and sharing. You may want to intersperse position changes in the group during this activity to help members remember persons rather than positions. This activity especially the name part, can be repeated at the beginning of the first few sessions until people are completely sure of one another's names. This takes very little time and removes some of the natural embarrassment and frustration members experience when they know they should remember a person's name but don't and are afraid to ask.

Draw Your World. This activity initiates the process of self-disclosure in the group and incorporates a visual dimension into the process of sharing. Have group members draw a picture that represents their world. They may use a symbolic approach or a pictorial approach but should not use words or written descriptions on the picture. The purpose is to portray a personal world as they see it and as they fit into it. When the drawing is completed have members turn the pictures over. On the back side have them write two words or brief phrases to describe each of the following perceptions: (1) how their friends see them, (2) how their family sees them, and (3) how they see themselves. Have each member describe his or her picture and answer questions about it. When all have shown their pictures, have them share the descriptions on the back. Additional perceptions that may be solicited are those of employer, teachers, students, colleagues, etc.

Facilitation

Role-Playing. Role-playing is one of the most flexible facilitation techniques in group counseling, and every counselor should develop expertise in its use. Role-playing in its simplest form means reenacting or acting out a situation in the group as if it were occurring in actuality. A more sophisticated and complex form is called psychodrama or sociodrama, depending on the focus involved. Role-playing makes use of simulation and modeling to help group members look more intensely at problem areas, both for deeper understanding of their concerns and for alternative solutions. It provides members with a highly realistic basis for transfer to the real environment, making the prospect of change less threatening and the implementation of change less difficult.

Role-playing can be appropriate any time a member gets into a descriptive discourse of a problem situation that involves other people. It is especially helpful when a person is having difficulty expressing a situation clearly or if a story seems to have discrepancies. Ask whether the member is willing to role-play the situation and, if so, ask for a brief description of the people and setting. Select other group members to play the roles of the people involved, and have the member give the participants a brief run-down on the personalities of the people they are playing. Then begin the role-play, making sure that participants stay in their roles until the role play is concluded or is terminated by the leader or member. Some leaders prefer to run through the whole situation whereas others approach it in small vignettes, stopping along the way to assess what is happening, to ask for feedback, or to point out something relevant to the problem. Make sure sufficient time is available when a role-play is completed for discussion in which participants and observers can reflect on what happened.

Many role-playing techniques can be used by a counselor. A few of those techniques briefly described in the following subtopics are: open-chair technique, role reversal, role substitution, and alter ego.

Open-Chair Technique. In this particular technique only one role-player is involved. It is useful when the problem under consideration involves only the member and one other person. Two chairs are placed facing each other and the member sits in one and the counselor in the other. A conversation is started, and as soon as it gets going the counselor leaves the chair. The client continues the conversation playing both roles, moving to the appropriate chair to speak for each party.

The open chair technique is also effective when an individual is struggling with inner conflicts that can be polarized into a dialog depicting the two sides of the struggle.

Role Reversal. This technique is similar to the open chair except that two persons (or more) are involved throughout the role-play. The member and the other person begin a conversation and at an appropriate point the leader intervenes to make them switch chairs and roles. The leader helps the conversation continue smoothly through the switch by repeating the last line that was stated before the reversal. In this way the continuity of the role-play is maintained, and participants get to look at things from each other's point of view.

Role Substitution. In many role-playing situations a useful technique is to have the main participant to be able to stand back and watch himself or herself in action. Once a role-playing situation is in full swing the counselor can ask another member to play the part of the main actor. The role-play continues with the main person watching his or her double in operation, trying to glean a greater awareness of the situation.

Alter Ego. To facilitate clearer and deeper understanding in a role-play, the leader may ask a group member to become alter ego to one or several of the participants. This person is a helper to the person in the role, representing some aspect of that person. The alter ego can operate independently or can be given specific instructions such as "interject now, and express the feelings of the person in the role." This technique is very useful but requires some training and practice for members to function effectively in the role of alter ego.

By combining any number of these techniques and extending the time and scope of the role-play, the group leader can create a full-scale sociodrama or psychodrama if that is beneficial to the member or the group. In school settings sociodramas are quite appropriate whereas psychodrama is relevant in treatment programs for chemically dependent clients and in a wide variety of therapy groups.

The Line-Up. Many times groups get into discussions that involve being "more than" or "less than" something. Some members may see themselves as more quiet or more shy than other people in social situations. Or some members may feel they are more trusting or committed in the group. The lineup is a useful facilitating technique in such situations. Clearly define the issue in terms of a continuum (most talkative to least talkative in social situations), and establish two points in the room to represent the two ends of the continuum. Then have members place themselves on the continuum where they feel most comfortable. The first time through each member chooses a spot in the line but no ties are permitted (two or more people at the same point). When the line has been established repeat the activity, but this time each person's position is determined by other members. Follow-up discussion can focus on the discrepancies and consistencies between the two lineups and the natural tendency for clustering in the middle on most issues.

Katz (1973) has suggested another version of the lineup. Place the group members in a straight line in the middle of the room (order is not important). Then designate the wall in front of the members as one endpoint of the continuum and the wall behind them as the other endpoint. Ask members to close their eyes and on a signal move to the spot where they feel they belong on the continuum. In this way the intragroup comparative nature of the exercise is minimized and each member reacts more independently and personally to the continuum issue itself.

Relationship Analysis. Many group members have relationship problems. Poppen and Thompson (1974) suggested a format to help members assess what is happening in their relationships and with the group's help identify whether they are balanced (mutually respectful). This procedure involves five basic steps:

1. describe the relationship,
2. specify the limits (specific boundaries) in the relationship,
3. state the responsibilities each person has in the relationship,
4. note the degree of freedom within the relationship, and
5. designate the amount of personal recreation (time alone) for each person in the relationship.

Discuss each step in the group and determine if the relationship is unbalanced and what can be done to achieve mutual respect in the relationship. The basic ideas behind this facilitative technique are that (1) all relationships have some limits and some specific areas of freedom, (2) every person should have designated responsibilities (even a child), and (3) personal recreation time (time alone) is important. If members can learn these principles, they can act constructively in resolving many of their relationship problems.

Three Things I'd Like to Change. This activity can be used to facilitate a work-oriented focus on specific problems of group members. Many times group members have difficulty resolving their problems because they do not know exactly what they want to change. This activity helps them identify clearly the areas that need changing. Have members write down three things about themselves that they would like to change. Have each member share the list with the group, giving brief explanations of each one. Then have each member select one area from the list and describe it in more detail (following these four basic behavioral steps):

1. Describe what you do not like about the way you are (the problem).
2. Describe how you would like to change (the goal).
3. Discuss with the group how you might be able to change, and form a strategy for doing so (the plan).
4. Try out the plan, and report back to the group on your progress (the follow-up).

For the last two steps some counselors like to use the contract system (Dustin & George, 1973), where the group member writes a plan as if it were a contract and signs it in the group's presence. This increases the specificity of the plan, promotes the individual's commitment to it, and gives the group a solid basis for reinforcing, encouraging, and evaluating the member's progress. This same procedure can be used for each of the changes noted on the initial lists.

Termination

Crystal Ball. This terminating activity requires the use of some object that resembles a crystal ball. Members are asked to think about the future and consider what and where they would like to be five years hence. (The time is flexible and can be varied according to the age level and particular setting of the group). The crystal ball is then passed from person to person and members describe as imaginatively and creatively as possible what they see for themselves in the future. Another way of proceeding is to have members project what they see in the future for their fellow members. This activity tends to give members a future orientation but is based in large measure on the learning and experience that has taken place in the group.

3 x 5 Evaluation. Some leaders like to get feedback regarding the group process at the end of each session. A kind of ongoing evaluation takes place that serves the leader's purposes for planning and revision and also helps members assess their experience during that particular session. One means of doing this is to distribute 3 x 5 cards on which members anonymously express their reactions, opinions, or suggestions about the group session. This evaluation can be done during the last five minutes of each session and cards can be deposited in a box as members leave. This activity also provides a cue to members that time is up and yet allows an opportunity for the expression of any feelings that members were not able to state during the meeting. Over time these cards can supply counselors with valuable feedback about their effectiveness.

Hope Chest. This activity is helpful for closing a group on a positive note, accentuating qualities of interpersonal support that have developed. Ask the group members to silently consider their hopes and wishes for every other member in the group. Pass out blank sheets of paper to members and have them write at the top "Hope Chest for (their own names)." Then have the members pass their sheet to the person on the right. When the exchange is made ask each member to draw a symbol that represents specific hopes for the person whose name appears at the top. Continue this process until each person in the group has made an entry on each sheet. When the sheets return to their owners, each member in turn holds up his or her "Hope Chest," and the other members explain the symbols they drew. A variation of this technique is to have members exchange symbolic gifts that represent wishes for one another.

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Chapter 12

FAMILY THEORY AS A GROUP RESOURCE

The impetus for including a chapter relating family theory to group process emanated from a variety of sources not the least of which was my own evolutionary development as a professional. Trained initially in an individually oriented, primarily Rogerian model that emphasized mobilization of the inner resources of the client to resolve their problems, I quickly realized a major difference exists between what happened in the office and what happened in the client's life. The helping process that relied on the therapeutic relationship to mobilize intrapsychic forces for the purpose of implementing change often was insufficient to overcome the insurmountable obstacles presented by the client's social system.

INTRODUCTION: THE CASE FOR INTEGRATION

In an effort to improve the transferability of the therapeutic process to the ongoing life experience of clients, I became interested in the group process which because of its character as a social milieu, offered advantages (as noted in Chapter 2) that greatly enhanced the probability of constructive change. However, even the group process was limited in that it could only represent reality. As a social laboratory group members could approximate the real world, but a gap still existed between their experience in the group and their experience outside the group.

The desire to work directly with a piece of reality, coupled with the observation that in both individual and group counseling problems typically had a family connection, resulted in my becoming involved in family counseling. However, my evolution was far from complete. The old expression "what goes around comes around" typifies what happened next. I moved from a position at a university where I was training counselors in all three modalities to a position as a practicing clinician where I was using all three modalities. This shift produced a basic dilemma because unilateral decisions as to appropriate modality were not always easy to make. Consequently, the question of whether these three modalities were mutually exclusive, sequential or tangential with areas of commonality as well as uniqueness was raised. Whether I wanted to or not, I had to grapple with the challenge of integration. This chapter is part of my response to that issue particularly from the perspective of relating group process and family theory.

Interfacing Group and Family Counseling

Efforts to develop a conceptual and pragmatic interface between group counseling and family counseling as differentiated but related therapeutic modalities have been emerging in the literature, in training and in clinical practice. From the group perspective, Ohlsen (1979) noted the high incidence of counselors doing marital work and compiled a set of articles that applied group methodology to couples. West and Kirby (1981) followed suit demonstrating the relevance of group methods in dealing with family issues and problems. Becvar (1982) reviewed literature comparing the family and other small groups and concluded that small group theory is a valid and useful resource in understanding and working with families. In 1982, the Association for Specialists in Group Work created a Commission on Family Counseling specifically to address the relationship between family counseling and group counseling. That Commission presented an initial program at the 1984 AACD Convention in Houston comparing and contrasting group and family counseling (Ritter, West, & Trotzer, 1986), a subsequent program in New York in 1985 on integrating and differentiating group and family counseling in theory, training, and practice, and most recently (1987) a program in Chicago entitled, "Group and Family Perspectives on a Simulated Family Session."

The fact that family counseling is receiving ever increasing attention in counselor education programs (Hovestadt, Fennell, & Piercy, 1983), professional conferences, in-service training, and continuing education programs has caught the attention of many counseling practitioners enticing them into the arena of exclusionary commitments, i.e., making family therapy the modality of choice across the board. However, despite its popularity, a strong case exists for family theory and therapy to be a resource to other counseling modalities as well as being a preferred interventive entity in its own right.

In fact, increasing evidence is available that a group and family specialization is not only viable, but recommended as a future oriented training necessity (Shapiro & Shapiro, 1985). Ruevini (1985) in addressing the critical issues facing group work in the future observed the following:

> Group workers. . .should realize that they need to involve themselves not only with the important issues of group methodology, research and the effectiveness of various available theoretical frameworks, but also with issues of the viability, importance and central position of the family group as a critical factor in people's lives. (p. 88)

He goes on to promote training in family therapy as an essential component of group leadership training.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the utility of family theory as a resource in group counseling. The basic premise is that just as group theory and techniques can be useful in understanding and helping families (Becvar, 1982) so family theory and techniques can be useful in understanding and helping individuals in groups. The chapter will first differentiate between group and family dynamics and then discuss family theory as a group resource. Family theory in relationship to group process and content and as a basis for developing group techniques will be presented. Guidelines and precautions for using family-based group techniques will be discussed, and the chapter will conclude with group learning activities derived from a family theory base.

DIFFERENTIATING THE FAMILY GROUP FROM THE COUNSELING GROUP

A family is a group with a history, structure, and organizational hierarchy which the counselor must join while a counseling group consists of individuals brought together by a counselor to create its own history and structure. The family group will continue regardless of interventive efforts while a counseling group will dissolve (Trotzer, 1988). Consequently, the family is a unit of relational reality that has continuity over time while the counseling group is artificially created to approximate relational reality which is time limited.

Tavantzis and Tavantzis (1985) noted additional differences between the family group and the counseling group. In counseling groups the purpose is to enable members to interact as equals in a safe environment where mutual help is a derived norm. The thrust is to create the possibility for members to share their vulnerabilities and experiment with new attitudes and behaviors. The leader often takes a responsible role in creating a safe atmosphere, but greatly relinquishes that role to the group as the group evolves.

In family groups, hierarchies take precedence over equality relative to membership, and the security of the group is more than an artifact of the group process. Vulnerability and freedom are greatly curtailed by the family members "shared history and interlocking roles and patterned behavior" (Tavantzis & Tavantzis, 1985, p. 4). The therapist must be continuously cognizant of the safety factor in the family as it extends beyond the therapy room. Hansen (Ritter, West, & Trotzer, 1986) observed that if people get nicked up in individual counseling or chewed up in group they can still turn to others for support and sustenance. But, if they get nicked up in family counseling, the most meaningful people in their lives are doing the attacking (p. 297). Thus, family members both bring their stressful environments with them and take them home while group members can get respite from their stressors.

In counseling groups (with some exceptions) membership is primarily voluntary whereas in family counseling members often attend involuntarily (parents bring children; wives coerce husbands). Thus, the advantage of working with a family is that you get to work with a piece of reality without having to rely on second hand accounts (individual counseling) or approximations of reality (group counseling). However, the disadvantage is that the resistance factors are accentuated.

While family theory and group theory both address the process involved in their respective units, the focus of change differs. In family counseling the unit of change is the family with subsequent impact on the individual while in groups, the unit of change is the individual.

Hovestadt (Ritter et at., 1986) stated the purpose of change in family counseling is to generate a higher level of functioning and satisfaction in the family system which is in contrast to group counseling where the goal is to improve the functioning of the individual (p. 296). In addition, the epistemology of the change process differs. Most individual and group approaches tend to be based on linear thought process models of causation whereas family counseling is based on systemic thinking which posits circularity as the causal framework. Change then only occurs when the pattern of interaction rather than the individual is modified. However, both modalities are interventive in nature attempting to utilize and/or create interpersonal dynamics that will result in therapeutic change. This particular factor paves the way for integration between the two modalities as will be explicated in the remained of this chapter.

FAMILY THEORY AS A RESOURCE

The significance and centrality of family data and experience are not new ideas in a therapeutic sense. Freud relied on family data particularly from a person's infancy to explain psychodynamically the characteristics of personality development. Adler emphasized the impact of a person's childhood family recollections in regard to the development of social interest and the emergence of their private logic and basic mistakes. However, family dynamics remained only a factor in the conceptualization of human problems and their subsequent resolution until the family theorists and their systemic orientation emerged in the 50s and 60s (Zuk, 1971). Since then, the field of family theory and therapy has blossomed into a fully developed conceptual and clinical entity as a bonafide approach to resolving human problems.

Family theory provides conceptual models that relate directly to group counseling in terms of process, content, and techniques. For group leaders who wish to utilize family theory as a resource, understanding the following conceptual components is recommended as a minimum basis for incorporating family concepts into group counseling:

1. overview of the growth and development of family theory and family therapy (Nichols, 1984; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1985; Barnard & Corrales, 1979);
2. the family as a system, i.e., systemic thinking from both a structural and strategic perspective (Minuchin, 1974; Madanes, 1981);
3. intergenerational family dynamics (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973; Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner, 1986; Bowen, 1966);
4. the developmental life cycle of the family (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988; Walsh, 1982); and
5. the impact of divorce and dynamics of single parent and remarried (blended) families (Cantor & Drake, 1983; Sager, Brown, Crohn, Engel, Rodstein, & Walker, 1983; Visher & Visher, 1979).

An introductory course in marriage and family counseling will address most of the above noted material and a follow-up course in marriage and family theories and techniques will provide the conceptual depth necessary to use family theory as a resource in leading groups.

FAMILY THEORY AND GROUP PROCESS

The family is a social unit which teaches its members about social interaction and supplies them with skills, perceptions and rules relative to how one is affected by and acts in social (interpersonal) situations. In group counseling each individual member reflects their family heritage, a factor which significantly affects the process of group development. Therefore, family theory constructs that explain the dynamics of family influence can be useful in helping group leaders address the tasks involved in starting a group and building a cohesive group structure while accounting for individual differences. For example, a person raised in an enmeshed family (Minuchin, 1974) may experience great difficulty attaching to the group during its initial stages due to loyalty issues, while a person raised in a disengaged family (Minuchin, 1974) may rapidly identify with the group but have difficulty or actually resist forming a committed attachment. Such reactions emanate from family based social expectations and rules that influence their behavior and experience in the group. As such, family theory provides a useful perspective as group members negotiate ground rules and establish group norms.

Family theory also provides process tools for the group leader. For example, Zuk (1981) has identified three key roles that the therapist plays in negotiating the therapeutic process. These roles are that of celebrant, go-between, and side taker.

> The ***celebrant*** is the role of "official" who presides over significant events such as a minister presides over a marriage or a judge over a jury trial. The role is crucial in establishing that an interaction or a problem is real and definitive so that it can be treated as a fact of life. By this means problems are acknowledged and established as the focus of attention.
>
> The ***go-between*** is the mediator role. This role is facilitative in nature enabling people with different perspectives to connect with and understand each other. The go-between sees that communication occurs, makes sure everyone is heard and serves as the channel for translating differences into understandings.
>
> The ***side-taker*** is the influence dimension of the counselor role where he or she judiciously chooses to take sides in the best interests of generating constructive change and problem resolution.

Based on the premise that a therapist cannot help but be drawn into emotional intensity between clients, these roles enable him or her to act constructively in spite of becoming emotionally inducted into the family system. The same dynamics affect the group leader when group members become engaged in intense interpersonal interactions. As such, being cognizant of and able to utilize these roles is a valuable process asset to group leadership.

The process applications of family theory to group counseling are innumerable. As groups develop cohesiveness, they take on more characteristics and traits that make them "just like a family" in many respects. However, as noted by Gazda (Ritter et al., 1986), groups can generate feelings that are similar to families but certain dimensions are always missing. Therefore, family theory is useful in understanding and guiding the group process, but should not be used as a means of recreating group experiences that are meant to be family experiences.

FAMILY THEORY AND GROUP CONTENT

In terms of content, a significant portion of problems and issues raised in group counseling are directly or indirectly related to family. Trotzer's (1985) *Interpersonal Problem Matrix* designates marital and family problems as a major subgroup of the category "conflicts in relationships" (p. 101). Yalom (1985) stated that "without exception patients enter group therapy with a history of a highly unsatisfactory experience in their first and most important group—their primary family" (p. 15). Although somewhat overstated for counseling groups, family experience does provide developmental and residual problems that are often addressed in groups. Satir (1972) stated simply that "troubled families make troubled people" (p. 18), and those troubles (or problems) tend to emerge in counseling groups.

Ruevini (1985) acknowledged the family as the source of pain in a past, present, and future sense, but also credits it as a major source of productive and positive support especially in periods of crisis. Family theory, therefore, is a vital resource relative to content of problems addressed in groups both from the standpoint of clearly delineating their nature and developing practical and realistic interventive strategies the individual member can use in dealing with them. For example, adolescent counseling groups usually deal with problems related to boundaries set by parents and the emerging generation gap. Subsequently, constructs drawn from the adolescent stage of the family life cycle are particularly applicable (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988; Walsh, 1982). In groups for young adults, understanding and utilizing individuation and differentiation concepts and helping group members establish and communicate I-positions where they are separate from but connected to parents, siblings and family are helpful group resources (Bowen, 1966).

Content applications of family theory are even more germane to group counseling than the process dimensions. Increased familiarity with the dynamics and perspectives of family life in relationship to individual development will enhance understanding of group member problems and improve the probability of constructive resolution strategies and potential change. Therefore, family theory has a direct relationship to the therapeutic impact of group counseling and therapy.

FAMILY THEORY AND GROUP TECHNIQUES

One primary vehicle for integrating family theory constructs into group counseling is the structured group technique. As noted in Chapter 11 structured activities have utility as initiating, facilitating and terminating tools in groups (Bates, Johnson, & Blaker, 1982; Trotzer, 1973). Coupled with family theory as an idea generation base (Trotzer, 1985), the group counselor can develop a myriad of activities that enhance group process and surface relevant material for group interaction.

Family based group techniques are advantageous for both intrapersonal and interpersonal reasons. Intrapersonally, such techniques are engaging because they tap a common experience, i.e., everyone has a family background. In addition, one's own family background is an arena where each person is more expert than anyone else. Thus, a common focus is generated where everyone has something meaningful to contribute. Interpersonally, a family focus produces a natural curiosity. Since everyone is a member of a family, each person tends to reflect on how his or her family is different from or similar to other families. Thus, family based group techniques provide a natural bridge between members facilitating cohesiveness and creating a context where similarities and differences can be acknowledged. Effectively used, family based group techniques will facilitate the group process and generate foci in accord with the problem solving purpose of the group's existence. Several examples of such techniques follow.

FAMILY BASED GROUP TECHNIQUES

Family Rules and Group Rules

One of the fundamental constructs of family theory is based on the premise that the family is a system. A system is a number of parts related in such a way that a change in one part affects all other parts (Barnard & Corrales, 1979). Systems operate on the basis of rules which are communicated to its members in either "spoken" (verbalized) or "unspoken" (nonverbalized operational rules that only family members know) form. These rules create the basis of group members' social expectations referred to previously. An activity entitled "Rules I Grew Up With" that surfaces these expectations is particularly useful as an initiating activity in the early stages of group counseling. The activity is as follows:

Rules I Grew Up With (Instructions)

1. Explain the difference between spoken and unspoken rules (Barnard & Corrales, 1979).

2. On a blank sheet of paper create two columns, one labeled "spoken" and the other "unspoken".

3. Have group members list examples of rules they grew up with in the appropriate columns.

4. Have group members share their lists and explain their entries.

5. Process the activity in relation to member expectations about group and relate the material to ground rules for group interaction.

The "Rules I Grew Up with" activity facilitates the expression of group members' expectations and begins the process of forming group norms. Group ground rules whether established by leader directive or group consensus are reflective of "spoken rules" and norms which evolve in groups are reflective of the "unspoken" variety. Just as families need effective boundaries so do groups. In group counseling therapeutic ground rules and norms can be forged out of the composite of group members' experiences with family rules. This activity also lays the ground work for helping members adjust to environments with differing boundaries (e.g., school or work setting) and modifying expectations that have been molded in family environments that are contributing to adjustment problems. Therefore, the material generated by this activity has both process and content relevance.

Sibling Position and Group Relationships

The family theory contention that significant aspects of a person's personality are forged in the family is useful in facilitating the development of relationships in the group. Constructs such as Toman's (1976) "family constellation" and "ordinal position in the sibling hierarchy" lend themselves well to an activity that effectively assists group members in connecting relationally. The following activity helps group members get acquainted and form relational bonds.

Sibling Position Personality Activity (Instructions)

1. Identify group members according to their birth order (oldest, second, middle, youngest, only or an appropriate modification of such, e.g., oldest of the second set of three).

2. Ask the group what they know about each person based on their birth order identification only: e.g., "What do you know about an 'oldest'?"

3. After each person's traits are proscribed by the group, ask that person to respond with their perspective of themselves (verification, modification or disconfirmation).

4. After each member has been discussed individually, discuss how different combinations of sibling position personalities might be expected to relate: e.g., "How would a youngest and an oldest relate", or "what might be happening between an oldest and second child?"

Discuss the activity in light of group process dynamics and interaction patterns in the group. Discussion usually brings the group to itself and the relationships forming as a result of group interaction. This activity is particularly useful in the cohesiveness stage of the group and helps members get to know each other quickly and effectively without excessive emphasis on self disclosure.

Family Legacy as a Group Resource

Intergenerational family constructs are particularly useful in the work or problem solving stage of the group. Decision-making in personal, interpersonal, vocational, and spiritual spheres of life are often influenced by the legacies a person inherits from their families of origin. An activity entitled "Houses in Your Life" is useful in exploring the psychodynamic forces operating in group member's lives.

Houses in Your Life (Instructions)

1. Have group members draw caricatures or bring photographs of the following family homes:
    a. maternal grandparents
    b. paternal grandparents
    c. parents (step-parents if applicable)
    d. current home (if different from parents)
2. Have members identify and share the following information relative to each home:
    a. a significant memory
    b. traits, attitudes or values associated with that home
3. Process the shared information in light of each member's current life style, decisions and problems.

Family of origin dynamics tend to be intricately involved in most problems group members discuss. This activity facilitates emergence of legacy material that tends to remain beneath the surface when considering here and now problems and future oriented decisions. Consequently, a broader base of information becomes available to the individual and the group that can be mobilized as part of the problem solving process. These examples illustrate how family theory can be integrated into the group process through the vehicle of a structured group technique. (Additional activities are described at the end of the chapter.) However, the material from family theory also can be integrated without reliance on structured techniques. Using the leadership tools described in Chapter 6, group leaders can introduce family dynamics in the context of using their reactive, active, and interactive skills to carry out their leadership functions.

GUIDELINES AND PRECAUTIONS

Although family based group techniques are relatively easy to develop and utilize, there are several important guidelines and precautions that must be observed.

1. **Remember the loyalty factor.** Whenever individuals are invited or induced to discuss their family, an automatic loyalty conflict is created particularly if negative information is involved. Consequently, group leaders must learn the skill of "multi-directed partiality" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). This skill enables the counselor to be partial to both the discloser's side and the family side without taking sides, thus enabling a constructive dialog to ensue between the sides in the safety of the group context. Raising the family's side of a group member's perspective enables the group member to disclose without feeling like a traitor because the group leader demonstrates fairness and caring not only for the member but for his or her family as well.

2. **Seek resources not skeletons.** The purpose of family based group techniques are to generate material that will provide understanding of the individual member

and assistance in helping that member deal with his/her problems or concerns. While family material can be extremely enticing from an interest perspective, leaders must avoid getting distracted by family story telling. If the material emerging cannot be directly related to the group process or the concerns of the individuals, measures should be taken to redirect the discussion.

3. **Avoid meddling in families.** A basic premise of group counseling is that the group can only directly affect persons who are in the group. This fact must be recognized and continually reaffirmed when using family based group techniques. Leaders must avoid doing long distance family therapy or turning group members into therapists for their own families. The tendency to meddle in families must be watched for and curtailed. Keeping the focus on the person rather than the family during sharing and discussion will circumvent the tendency to dabble in family dynamics without a clear purpose with respect to the individual member.

4. **Build family based group techniques from concepts rather that content.** Most people are private where information related to their families is concerned. Group techniques should be created out of a sound conceptual framework and not merely for the purpose of eliciting particular information. The structure of the technique should be such that members do not feel threatened by the content of the desired disclosure. Apprise group members of the construct undergirding the activity which relates to all group members so that they will feel comfortable in supplying the subsequent information.

5. **Avoid family based techniques which elicit emotionalized or traumatic disclosures.** Family encounters often produce the most painful emotional reactions. Psychological wounds garnered in the context of family relationships tend to produce emotional responses whether they represent recent or old wounds. Leaders must be sensitive to the traumatizing potential in family based activities discarding high risk activities or

modifying instructions to temper the level of emotional impact.

Note: In therapy groups with members who have experienced intrusive acts in a family context (e.g., incest or physical/emotional abuse) this guideline does not constitute avoidance, but rather a monitoring of disclosures to maintain a pace and focus that facilitates therapeutic working through of such experiences (Courtois & Leehan, 1982).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

Family theory provides a vast resource base for the group counselor. Whether used from a dynamic perspective as a means of understanding and assisting group members, as a catalyst relative to group process and content or translated into group techniques, it is a valuable entity for extending the group practitioner's expertise. When used ethically and wisely, the impact and utility of group work as a therapeutic modality will be enhanced.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The learning activities that follow are divided into five loosely defined categories based on the nature of their conceptual origins, the content produced or the general focus of the activity. The categories are (1) impact of the family, (2) exploring family dynamics, (3) individual development in a family context, (4) exploring legacy dynamics, and (5) couple's group activities.

Impact of the Family

Introduction Dyads: The Family Perspective. This activity is an excellent initiating activity in groups. Using a format of revolving dyads, have group members introduce themselves from the following perspectives:

1. Grandparent (legacy) Perspective: Introduce yourself as if your grandparents were introducing you . . ."This is my grandson/daughter (name). He/she . . ."
2. Family of Origin Perspective: Introduce yourself as your parents would introduce you . . . "This is my son/ daughter (name). He/she . . ."
3. Sibling Perspective: Introduce yourself as your siblings (brother/sister) would introduce you. . . "This is my brother/sister (name). He/she . . ."
4. Intimate Partner Perspective: Introduce yourself as your intimate partner (husband/wife, lover, finance', etc.) would introduce you . . . "This is my (husband/wife, etc) (name). He/she . . ."
5. Family of Creation Perspective: Introduce yourself as your children would introduce you . . . "This is my mother/father (name). He/she . . ."
6. Self Perspective: Introduce yourself as you would introduce you . . . "My name is . . . . . I . . ."

Step family perspectives can be added or substituted depending on the group. For any perspective that does not currently exist (e.g., member does not have children or was an only child), the member should make up an introduction as they would like it to be if it did exist. Each member can also be given a 3 x 5 card to record significant traits that emerge from each introduction. These data can be self-recorded or the result of feedback from the partner who picks out one or two traits that stood out in the introduction.

When all perspectives have been shared convene the total group and process the activity from the perspective of how it helped group members get to know one another and how family relationships affect personality development and identity.

Exploring Family Dynamics

Family Tree. One of the places where love and belonging is crucial to the growth and development of a person is in the family. This activity is designed to help each person consider how family background has contributed to who he or she is today. Furnish each person with paper and crayons for drawing. On the paper have group members draw a symbolic tree. The type of tree should represent each person's family; its color should symbolize feelings about childhood; the ground should represent the nature of growth and development, and the background should indicate dominant childhood memories.

After members complete the drawings (10 minutes), pair members off and have them explain their drawings to each other. Have them discuss how they fit into their respective families at the present time (15 minutes). Form groups of four (two pairs) and have each person discuss the partner's tree and family relationship, pointing out things that seem interesting and significant (25 minutes).

Family Sculpture. Another activity that demonstrates the love-and-belonging aspect of family relationships is the family sculpture. Select a volunteer to create a family sculpture. Have him or her design a sculpture of his or her family that represents the relationships as he or she sees them. He or she can use other group members as figures and should include himself or herself in the sculpture. On completion of the sculpture have the sculptor describe why he or she placed each person in the position he or she did and what his or her own relationship to the family is. After that discussion have the same volunteer form another family sculpture using different members of the group (the first sculpture should remain intact except for the sculptor). The second sculpture should be an ideal picture of the family. Follow-up discussion should deal with similarities and differences between the two sculptures. You can repeat this several times but usually once or twice is sufficient to generate meaningful discussion. This technique is very useful as a tool in helping clients who are experiencing problems in their families.

Draw Your Childhood Table. Utilize the following instructions:

1. On a large sheet of paper draw the shape of the table your family ate at when you were growing up (between ages 7 and 12).

2. Place members of your family around the table in their usual places using rectangles around names of males and circles around females. Identify parents and include yourself. An example is provided in Figure 12.1.
3. On the surface of the table write descriptors (words and phrases) which describe what it was like for you to live in this family.
4. Near each member at the table write at least two phrases or comments that describe their personality.

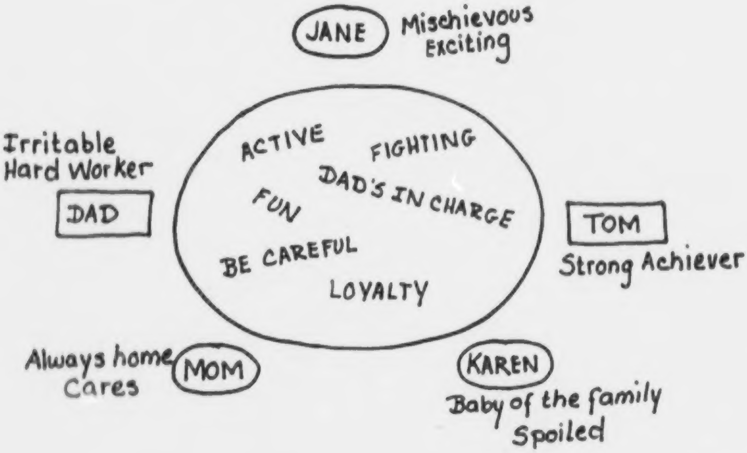

JANE
Mischievous
Exciting
Irritable
Hard Worker
DAD
ACTIVE
FIGHTING
DAD'S IN CHARGE
FUN
BE CAREFUL
LOYALTY
TOM
Strong Achiever
Always home
Cares
MOM
KAREN
Baby of the family
Spoiled

Figure 12.1. Example of table with family members seated in regular positions for meals plus words to describe personalities and feelings.

Have each member share their family table with the group. If used as a homework task, have members write a one page description of their family of origin.

This activity can be modified to the present family table and used to explore current family dynamics. Another version is to have members do both their childhood and current family tables. Processing then involves comparing and contrasting one's experience in family of origin and family of creation.

Another effective method of processing the material from this activity is to use the ***family-o-gram technique.*** Each person at the table is assigned a typical statement or comment they have been known to make. These statements are then given to other group members who represent the family members. The group member stands in the center of a circle composed of his or her family members who then repeat the phrases consecutively in a rapid-fire manner attempting to capture both the content and affect of the message. The family-o-gram is concluded by having each family member repeat their phrase or statement at the same time attempting to solicit the group member's attention. The experience is then reviewed in light of the messages and perceptions the group member carries with him or her from their family experiences.

Belongingness-Separateness Activity. All families provide their members with two basic experiences growing up: experiences of belongingness and experiences of separateness. These experiences combine to create a dynamic force in identity development (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986). Belongingness experiences are of two types: those that are engaged in freely and with enthusiasm and those that are forced upon children and participated in grudgingly. Separateness similarly is divided into activities that were encouraged and discouraged (Figure 12.2).

Pass out a sheet with columns as identified in Figure 12.2 and have group members identify belongingness and separateness experiences they had in their families growing up.

Have group members share their experiences either column by column or overall. Process the information in terms of the impact of these experiences on the identity, personality and values of each person in the group. This activity is effective in helping members get to know each other on a deeper level and begins to surface the unmet needs and strengths in group member's lives.

Belongingness		**Separateness**	
Free Choice	Forced	Encouraged	Discouraged

Figure 12.2. Sample sheet for belongingness-separateness activity.

Individual Development in a Family Context

Individuals in the Family Life Cycle. Pass out the diagram found in Figure 12.3. Have group members plot the following information about themselves and their family.

1. Place a dot and the initials of each family member (parents, spouse, siblings, children, grandparents) including self on the birth to death individual development (ID) line.

2. If married, draw a line from the age at which marriage occurred to the marriage dot on the family life cycle (FLC) line. (If divorce and/or remarriage has occurred, add that information by identifying age at divorce on the ID line and draw a line from age at remarriage to the marriage dot on the FLC line.)

3. Life expectancy date: Have males draw a line from their current age on the ID line to the dot representing 71 (male life expectancy) on the FLC line. Have females draw a line from their current age to the dot representing 78 (female life expectancy) on the FLC line.

4. Family life cycle data: Draw a line straight up from the age of your oldest child on the ID line to the FLC line. (This gives an approximation of the stage in the family life cycle the family is in.) If a step-family is involved, draw a line straight up from the age of the oldest child in each biological family unit.

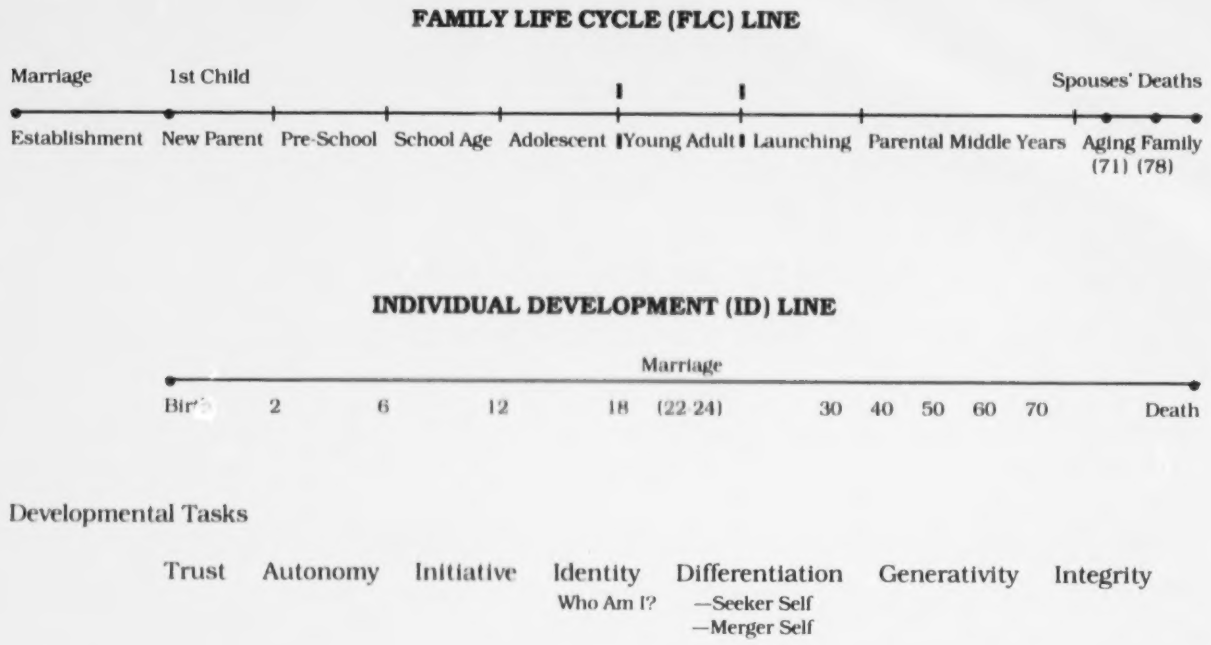

FAMILY LIFE CYCLE (FLC) LINE
Marriage
1st Child
Spouses' Deaths
Establishment
New Parent
Pre-School
School Age
Adolescent
Young Adult
Launching
Parental Middle Years
Aging Family
(71)
(78)
INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT (ID) LINE
Marriage
Birth
2
6
12
18
(22-24)
30
40
50
60
70
Death
Developmental Tasks
Trust
Autonomy
Initiative
Identity
Who Am I?
Differentiation
—Seeker Self
—Merger Self
Generativity
Integrity

Figure 12.3. Individual and Family Development

The information charted can be processed as a means of getting acquainted and understanding the context in which each group member is living. Data such as decade of life, stage of the family life cycle, years left to live, or years of married life left, complexity of living in single or remarried families all tend to emerge in the sharing and provides valuable material both for developing closeness and understanding in the group and pinpointing problem areas.

Family Life Cycle Analysis. This activity is designed to help members look specifically at their experience in their family from a developmental perspective. The instructions are as follows: Answer the following questions or respond to the directives relative to your family's current position in the family life cycle. Briefly review the typical stages of family life (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986, pp.225-234).

1. In what stage of development is your family at this time? Explain why you made that assessment. (Remember some families may be in more than one stage at any one time.)
2. Write one sentence describing how each person in your family is currently experiencing the family (include yourself), e.g., if you have five people in your family write 5 sentences.
3. With what issues or problems is your family currently dealing that are typical of the family's stage of development.
4. What is your family doing to deal with the issues or problems listed above?
5. Describe the nature or condition of the marital relationship in your family. Indicate how it contributes and/or hinders the family's ability to deal with the tasks and problems of its developmental stage.
6. Have each group member share their analysis with the group for the purpose of pinpointing common issues and problems emanating from the stages of family development represented.

This activity is useful in agenda setting as group members identify issues they are struggling with that can be worked on in the group.

Five Roles Activity. Everyone plays many different roles as a normal part of daily life. Some of these roles are more important than others, and some roles cause conflicts with others. This activity is to help members clarify their values with regard to several of the most important roles they play. Have each group member write five commonly played roles on five different 3 x 5 cards. Then seat the group in a circle and ask them to decide individually which role they would be most willing to give up. Have them throw that card into the middle of the circle. Then have the members discuss why they threw away that particular role without necessarily revealing the nature of the roles they have retained. When the discussion is completed, repeat the same process with the four roles that remain. Continue the cycle of throwing away one role and discussing why until each member has only one left. Conclude the activity by having members describe why they kept the particular role they did and what their feelings were as they proceeded to discard roles.

An alternative procedure is to eliminate the discussion between decisions and have only one extensive discussion of the whole process at the end when each person has only one role left.

Another modification is to make certain roles mandatory as part of the five, such as job, parent, spouse. This creates a set of dynamics that typifies the stressors in each person's life when demands of job and family compete for time and energy. Process the activity in terms of daily decisions made to allocate time, energy, and resources to these roles and relative to priorities and values that often conflict with behavior creating stress and tension in daily living.

Expectations and How We Live. Describe the scale represented in Figure 12.4. (Note: Categories on this scale are generic and can be modified or expanded to be more relevant to the members of your group.) The instructions are as follows:

1. Fold the sheet so that only the "Important" column is showing and rank the categories 1 through 9 based on their importance to you where 1 represents the most important.

Categories	Importance	Time	Satisfaction
1. **Work:** This category includes all jobs or tasks you perform for which you are paid. (Include full time and part time) (School, full time or part time fits here)			
2. **Family:** This category includes activities and time spent with all or some (at least one) members of your nuclear family, meaning parent(s) and children.			
3. **Extended Family:** (Family of origin) This category includes time and activities with members of your extended family (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)			
4. **Marriage:** This category includes time spent specifically with your spouse exclusive of other family members. (Includes social activities together)			
5. **Personal:** This category includes individual activities and interests you pursue apart from your family/mariage/work. (Hobbies, recreation, time alone, etc.)			

6. **Organizations:** This category includes time and activities in groups you belong to such as civic or professional groups, community organizations, clubs, etc.			
7. **Domestic:** This category includes activities or tasks you are responsible for to run and maintain your household, e.g., chores, cleaning, cooking, house maintenance, etc.			
8. **Church:** This category includes church related and other activities that have a spiritual dimension and require time and commitment to pursue.			
9. **Step Family:** This category includes all activities with step-children if you differentiate them from the family category above.			

Figure 12.4. Expectations and how we live.

2. Fold the sheet so that only the "time" column is showing and rank the categories 1 through 9 on the basis of actual time spent in doing the activities of that category where 1 represents the most time spent.

3. Fold the sheet so that only the "satisfaction" column is showing and rank the categories 1 through 9 on the basis of personal satisfaction experienced in each category where 1 represents the most satisfaction.

4. Unfold the sheet so all rankings can be compared. Have each member analyze their rankings for congruence (importance, time, and satisfaction are directly related) or incongruence (discrepancies exist between the importance, time, and satisfaction columns).

5. Have group members share their rankings and analysis in the group.

This activity is particularly useful in groups where stress and stress management are topics of importance.

Exploring Legacy Dynamics

Family Genogram Activity. Genograms are useful tools in helping group members explore their personhood and legacy. The instructions that follow are for a limited or working genogram that can be constructed quickly. For more extensive information about genograms refer to McGoldrick and Gerson (1985).

1. Construct a genogram of your family consisting of persons in each generation that *you know or have known personally.* (Do not include generational entries of people you have heard about like great, great, great grandparents.)

2. Be sure to include both sides of your parent's families and in cases of blended families include significant generational relationships such as step-grandparents.

3. Most genograms should include:

   a. your generation (spouse and siblings)
   b. your children (if applicable)
   c. your children's children (if applicable)
   d. your parents
   e. your grandparents
   f. your great grandparents

4. Indicate birth order via sequence and age. (See Figure 12.5 for example.)

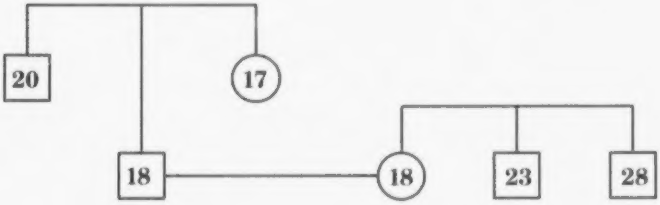
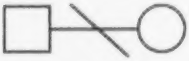


Figure 12.5. Example of sibling level.

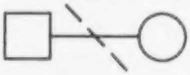
5. Use ○ for females and □ for males.

6. Indicate deaths by × through the age and symbol, e.g., ⊗

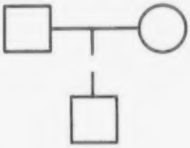
7. Indicate divorces with slashes through the line connecting the two persons



and separations with dashes.



8. Use broken lines to indicate adoption.



9. Place a star by those family members you resemble the most.

10. Place a check mark by those family members you resemble the least.

11. Optional: Identify traits or tendencies in your family such as alcohol abuse, diseases (cancer, heart attacks, etc.) by appropriate designations (e.g., circle alcohol abuser in red).

Creating a genogram is a good homework assignment and can be used for both getting to know one another and to explore a person's background in greater depth in relation to a particular problem such as alcohol abuse.

Have group members present their completed genograms to the group and then brainstorm possible dynamics that may be operating in the person's life. Some groups continue to develop genograms over the course of the group process so the technique has both short term and long range utility.

Marriage and Family: The Impact of Legacy. The following activity may be used in total or in part to help group members explore the impact of their family of origin on their current lives particularly in the context of current family relationships. The activity can be administered as a homework task or used as a guide to structuring discussion around each of the topics built into the activity.

1. **The Revolving Slate:** Growing up in our family of origin often produces resolutions about marriage and family that we find are tested once we become married and have a family. We

are often surprised and even disappointed that patterns or traits are repeated even when we had determined they would not be.

a. Make a list of statements you recall making as you grew up in your family that reflect how you wanted your marriage and family life to be. Most of these statements will take the form of resolutions or vows starting with stems such as:

   When I'm married I'll . . . .
   The person I marry will (will not) . . . .
   I will never . . . .
   My children will (will not) . . . .

b. Indicate which of the preceding statements are the most important to you and why.

c. Have you altered any of the preceding statements or found any to be inaccurate. If so, how does that make you feel and how did the change occur?

2. **Adopting-Adapting:** Growing up in our family of origin produces certain experiences and values which we wish to emulate in our own marriage and family. Complete the following tasks to help you discover how the positives in your family legacy have influenced you.

   a. Make a list of experiences in your family of origin that have resulted in treasured memories:

b. Complete the following statement: The traits and values I admire most about my family are . . .

c. Identify one of your treasured memories that you would like to (or have) *adopted* in your family of creation in the same way you experienced it. Explain why and indicate problems you have or may have in doing so.

d. Identify one of your treasured memories you would like to (or have) *adapted* in your family of creation. Explain how you would like to (or have) modify(-ied) it and why.

3. **Opposing-Rejecting:** Growing up in our family of origin produces certain experiences and impressions we want to negate or avoid reconstructing in our own marriage and family. Complete the following tasks to help you discover how the negatives in your family legacy have influenced you.

   a. Make a list of experiences in your family of origin that have resulted in negative memories:

   b. Complete the following statement: The traits I consider undesirable and values I disagree with in my family of origin are . . .

   c. Identify one thing you will do or have done in your family of creation that makes sure the negative experience you had will not be repeated. Explain how that change will affect your children's experience.

d. Identify how one of the above listed experiences could be (or has been) handled differently in your family of creation. Indicate how you discovered the means of changing it.

Decisions Across the Generations. Every generation is faced with choices and decisions which must be made in the course of forming its identity in and impact on the flow of life. These decisions may be repetitive emerging in every generation or may be unique to the historical time frame or context. This activity is designed to explore the generational relatedness or non-relatedness of personal decisions. It is best conducted as an out-of-group process where group members actually discuss with grandparents and parents what they consider their most important decisions were and are. In the absence of the opportunity to obtain the data first hand, the group member can project the data from memory or conjecture. Have group members identify the most important decisions (specific choices) that their (1) grandparents made, are making, and must make; (2) parents made, are making, and must make; and (3) they have made, are making, and must make. Upon completion, have group members share the data comparing and contrasting their contemporary generational decisions (problems and issues) with those of the previous two generations. Process the activity in light of common and different problems and in terms of assets and resources that are available from past generations that can be mobilized in resolving current problems.

Couples Groups

The activities that follow are particularly appropriate to couples groups where intimate partners can benefit from sharing with each other as well as in the group. The resource for these and other couples activities is *Marriage and Family: Better Ready Than Not* by Trotzer and Trotzer (1986).

Expecting To Be Loved. One of the most significant aspects of an intimate relationship is the love dimension. However, the definition of love and more particularly how it is expressed is the root of many relational issues. The following activity is useful in helping couples assess and express their similarities and differences relative to the behavior of demonstrating love. Have each group member rank the five categories described in Figure 12.6 on the basis of their own preference for giving and receiving love. Then have them rank their perception of their intimate partner's preferences for giving and receiving love. Use 1 to represent the top preference.

When the individual rankings are completed have each couple share their rankings with each other using them as a basis for discussion. When the couple dyads are finished, reconvene the group and process the activity in light of male or female preferences and characteristics and personality traits of the couples and individuals in the group.

Attraction Dimension in Couples. The following activity is a good get-acquainted activity because it focuses couples on a typically positive time in their lives and provides a comfortable channel for couples to share themselves with each other. The instructions are as follows:

1. Complete the following statements with respect to your partner.

   a. When I first met you I was attracted to you because . . . .

   b. When I got to know you I was attracted to you because . . .

   c. Now I am attracted to you because . . . .

   d. Share your response with your partner

EXPECTING TO BE LOVED

	ME	SPOUSE
1. WORDS—One way to express love is simply by saying "I love you," or "You look nice in that dress," or "I like the way you did that." Verbal statements affirming love bring a great deal of emotional security to some of us.	______	______
2. GIFTS—A second love language is gifts. They need not be expensive to be valuable. A gift says, "He was thinking of me when we were apart." You cannot secure a gift without thinking about the person to whom you will give it. It is a deliberate act of love.	______	______
3. ACTIONS—Doing things for your spouse can be a powerful communication of love. Cooking a meal, washing dishes, dusting, vacuuming the floor, taking out the garbage, putting gas in the car, etc., are all ways of expressing love.	______	______
4. TIME—Spending "quality time" with your spouse is also a means of expressing love. Quality time is giving your spouse your undivided attention. Whether you are sitting on the couch, taking a walk, or sharing a meal at a quiet restaurant, when you focus on listening and sharing with your spouse, you are communicating love.	______	______
5. TOUCH—Physical touch is recognized as an important way to express love. Kissing, embracing, sexual intercourse, or other affectionate physical contacts are a means of communicating love.	______	______

Figure 12.6. Five categories relating to expressing love.

2. Telling the story of your courtship and marriage. Use as a way for couples to introduce themselves to the group.

   A. **His** turn: Share with the group how you met, and became involved with each other

   B. **Her** turn: Describe how you decided to get married

3. In the columns in Figure 12.7 indicate examples (specific things) that attract you to your partner. Fit them into the category you believe is most appropriate.

Similarities (How we are alike)	**Differences** (How we are different)	**Exchanges** (How we contribute to each other)

Figure 12.7. Sample sheet for categorizing specific things that attracted one to his or her partner.

4. Share the column information in same sex sub-groups. Each partner shares his or her perception of the attraction dimension in the intimate relationship.

5. Reconvene the group and discuss the importance of attraction as a relationship characteristic in intimate relating.

Basic Arenas of Marital Conflict. Distribute and briefly explain the diagram located in Figure 12.8 (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986, pp. 185-187). Have each couple identify a list of specific issues from their own relationship that relate to the four arenas of marital conflict. Have them identify three issues they would be willing to discuss in the group. Convene the group and have each couple share the issues they would like to discuss and give a brief description of it to the group. When all couples have shared their issues, form an agenda for group work either by selecting a problem/issue of common concern to the couples in the group, or by having each couple identify a first priority issue. Organize the work of the group around the agenda making sure each couple's issue or version of the issue is addressed.

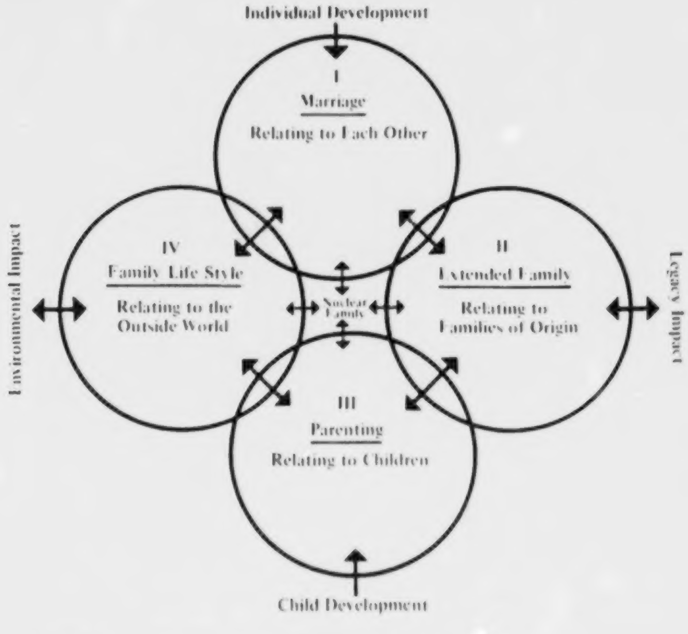

Individual Development
I
Marriage
Relating to Each Other
IV
Family Life Style
Relating to the Outside World
Nuclear Family
II
Extended Family
Relating to Families of Origin
III
Parenting
Relating to Children
Environmental Impact
Legacy Impact
Child Development

Figure 12.8. Basic arenas of marital conflict

Relationship Analysis Inventory. Give a brief introduction to the activity by describing the four component parts of an intimate relationship (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986, pp. 162-170). Have each partner complete the *Relationship Analysis Inventory* (Figure 12.9) and then share their results with each other. Have them identify the area(s) they want to work on in the group. Have each couple share what they learned about their relationship with the group and use the information to solidify the group and create a work focus.

INSTRUCTIONS: Select an intimate relationship you are currently involved in (boy/girl friend, fiance', spouse, intimate partner) and fill in the columns below as follows:

1. Togetherness: Indicate those activities the two of you participate in together.
2. Apartness: Indicate those activities you engage in separate from your partner.
3. Pushing-Resisting: a) Identify the things about you your partner does not like or wishes you would change. b) Identify the things about your partner that you do not like and wish he/she would change.
4. Leading-Supporting: a) Identify the things you take the initiative in while your partner gives you his/her support and encouragement. b) Identify the things your partner takes the initiative in where you give him/her your support and encouragement.

1. Togetherness	2. Apartness	3. Pushing-Resisting	4. Leading-Supporting
		a)	a)
		b)	b)

Figure 12.9. Relationship Analysis Inventory

The *Relationship Analysis Inventory* also can be used as a homework task for the couple to work on together. Each couple then presents their analysis to the group. The results are processed as a means of identifying work areas and setting agendas for the group and the individual couples.

Marriage Vows Activity. Marriage vows raise the issue of commitment and their content elicits the definitions and values that undergird that commitment. The following activity is appropriate for both pre-marital and post-marital couples' groups and can be utilized as either a group activity or a combined couple and group activity. If a combined approach is used, the sequence can be either couple-group or group-couple. Results will vary based on sequence, but the end result will be deeper understanding, appreciation, and meaning for couples relative to their own commitment to each other and for the group relative to the importance of commitment in marriage. The instructions are as follows:

1. For group/couple

Read the example of typical marriage vows below and then as a group/couple create your own emphasizing the elements you feel are most important. You may wish to use either traditional or contemporary language.

> (name) , will you have (name) as your(husband/wife)? Will you live with (him/her) according to God's will? Will you love and comfort (him/her), honor and support (him/her), in times of joy and trial, as long as you both shall live?
>
> I, (name), take you, (name) , to be my (wife/husband) from this day forward, as long as I live; to be with you in times of joy and suffering, and wealth and poverty; to love and honor you, according to God's will; I therefore pledge you my faithfulness.

2. For couples

   a. Write out your version of realistic marriage vows.

b. Share your marriage vows with the group.

c. As a group, discuss and respond to the marriage vows shared.

d. As a couple, review and, if desired, refine or revise your vows based on input from the discussion.

e. Using the group leader as presider, each couple may wish to recite their vows to each other in the presence of the group as a recommitment experience.

Marriage: The Sexual Dimension. Sex in marriage serves four basic functions. Sex is the means of expressing and experiencing ***Intimacy.*** Sex is the means of meeting each persons ***Need*** for sexual gratification and release. Sex is the means by which partners ***Reproduce*** themselves. Sex is the means by which physical ***Pleasure*** and enjoyment is experienced. All are important facets of the sexual dimension. The instructions for this activity are as follows:

1. Personally rank Intimacy, Need, Pleasure, and Reproduction in order of priority for you as a person (Trotzer & Trotzer, 1986, pp. 181-185).

   ___ Intimacy
   ___ Need
   ___ Pleasure
   ___ Reproduction

2. Share your ranking and your explanation with your partner.

3. Suggested Personal Sharing Tasks (Between Partners)

   a. Share a special memory of your sexual life together.

   b. Share the most enjoyable aspect of sex for you.

   c. Share one thing you would like to change or add to your sex life.

   d. Identify differences between you and your partner with respect to sexual relating.

e. Discuss how you think you obtained your perspective and values relative to sex (what influences you to see sex as you do?)

f. Share your perception of the current state of your sexual relating.

g. What sexual experience(s) do you anticipate with each other? (Share your sexual fantasies).

4. Have a group discussion of the four dimensions of sexuality noted in the opening paragraphs of this activity. Discuss similarities and differences relative to

   a. values and religious training,

   b. influence of legacy and family of origin,

   c. male and female perspectives, and

   d. developmental dynamics (age, family status, etc.).

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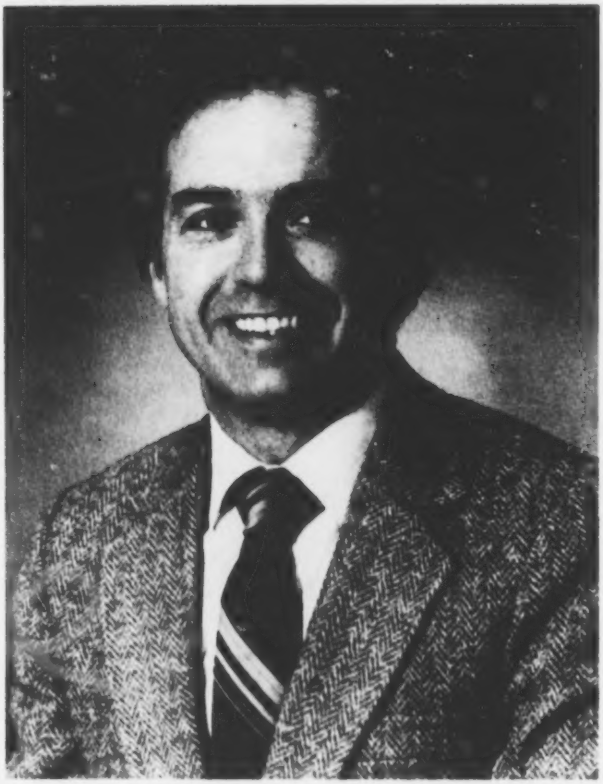

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